

**The Role of Dramaturgy in Change Management
in Shell Oman Marketing Company**

Case Study of installing CCTV cameras

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Abstract

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Key words: Dramaturgy, Front stage, Backstage, Performance, Change Management, CCTV, Shell, Oman.

Inspired by my personal interest in the topic of dramaturgy, coupled with the continuous change programmes that Shell Oman Marketing Company (SOMC) adopts in many areas, this research attempts to explore the role of dramaturgy (Goffman 1956) in change management in SOMC. The primary question that this thesis addresses is: What is the role, impact and potential of dramaturgy in change management in SOMC? The objective is to examine the ability of dramaturgy to offer an effective method for managing change, and one that will eventually be used as an integral part of effective change management programmes in SOMC.

The research consists of a case study of installing Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system cameras in the offices of SOMC. The research was a qualitative study, conducting 22 semi-structured interviews along with unstructured observations of meetings and engagements. The research concludes that front stage performances and backstage performances are witnessed extensively in SOMC, and concludes that the boundary between front and backstage is

blurred, that stories, metaphors and body language play an important role in performances, and that the audience perception of the authenticity, sincerity and genuineness of the performers is a key factor in their acceptance of the message. This research identifies a number of themes that can be added to the existing literature. The study highlighted the importance of 'Alignment' as a way of explaining the work that goes on in backstage and front stage performances, much part of living organisations. The term found extensively in organisational life at SOMC and many other organisations. Backstage meeting often has the goal of aligning participants to the message that has to be conveyed – the coordinated front stage performance. Therefore, alignment is a key element of the rehearsals and practices for the frontstage performances, and in bringing together the supporting team and loyalists. Another contribution of this research that is not available in other studies is that the importance of context and culture. That although metaphors and storytelling are used in many organisations across the world, they resonate particularly with Omanis because they are part of their history and culture. Hence using storytelling and metaphors in performances in SOMC can have a huge help connecting the audience with the performance.

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Dedication

In memory of my parents;

My mother Zainab who raised me on appreciating knowledge and embracing every learning opportunity. Something that unfortunately was not available to her, and;

My father Mahmood who I wish had more time in life so I could know him better.

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‘Acting is the least mysterious of all crafts. Everybody acts. It’s hard to imagine anyone surviving in our world without acting. It is a necessary social device: we use it to protect our interests and to gain advantage in every aspect of our lives, and it is instinctive, a skill built into all of us. Whenever we want something from somebody or when we want to hide something or pretend, we’re acting. Most people do it all day long.’ Brando, M. (1994, p.82)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preface

This thesis serves as my final research for my Doctoral of Business Administration (DBA) degree. It explores the role of dramaturgy (Goffman 1956) in change management in Shell Oman Marketing Company (SOMC), addressing the primary research question: What is the role, impact and potential of dramaturgy in change management in SOMC? The objective is to examine the ability of dramaturgy to form an effective method in change management processes, and one that will eventually be used as an integral part of effective change management programmes in SOMC. This will form the basis for further research to explore its value in other organisations. The thesis is structured as follows: the literature review focuses mainly on dramaturgy, with the management of change as the context of the research. After a critical analysis of the literature around dramaturgy, for instance, (Biehl-Missal, 2011, Brown, 2005, Cornelissen, 2004, Cunliffe, 2014, Goffman, 1956, Greener, 2007, Höpfl, 2002), I apply the theory to practice in SOMC in the context of change management. This is achieved through a case study of the installation of a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

system incorporating cameras in the offices of SOMC. The method consists of qualitative semi-structured interviews and unstructured observations used to gather primary data. In addition, secondary data was gathered from emails as well as from transcripts of speeches and notes.

The thesis concludes that dramaturgy has been and can continue playing a vital role in change management in SOMC, where both front stage performances and backstage performances are witnessed extensively. The thesis also concludes that staff members believe that sincerity and authenticity perceived by the audience (change recipients) in the performance (role play or act) of the manager/change agent is a decisive element in accepting that message in a change context. Tapping on emotions and sharing personal experiences are supporting tools that can assist building authenticity and sincerity. Moreover, using metaphors and storytelling in the performance proven to be effective tools once used in the right form and context. The thesis also reveals that managers may lose their audience in the organisation if the same audience sees them backstage and it happened that the two performances were not consistent or even completely different.

The data gathered for this research also shows that the boundaries between front stage and backstage in SOMC are blurred. The perception of front stage performance versus backstage varies from an individual to another. It depends on how the individuals were looking at it and what were their intentions before stepping in, or while the performance was taking place. What is seen as a backstage performance to one, may be looked at as a front stage to another. This can even be the case despite that both

individuals may come from the same side, both being either change agents or change recipients. It also depends on how each individual look at the topic of dramaturgy from a philosophical point of view without necessarily being familiar with the academic works. While both front stage performances and backstage performances are witnessed extensively in SOMC, interestingly, dramaturgy terms such as social acting and stage performance can still be perceived in a negative way by many. Front stage performance is usually referred to as an engagement or a meeting where a number of topics are discussed or a message is conveyed. These meetings can be in any location that can accommodate the attendance (usually an office, a meeting room, or a hall). They can also take place virtually where people are attending via an audio or a video conferencing. On the other hand, backstage performance is generally known as an alignment or a preparation meeting, where normally access is given to a relatively fewer individuals. The interesting thing is that even those alignment meetings, which are supposed to be a backstage performance, are front stage performances to some, who ensure that they don't reveal their personal stand on the topic but rather decide to perform the role that they have to play in the organisation in that specific engagement. Also, for them revealing their true feelings and belief will lead to them possibly losing the audience and their trust moving forward.

Hence, the data gathered for this research suggest that the boundaries between front stage performance and backstage performance are blurred. This is mainly driven by the realities of the individuals versus the role they play

in the organisation. In addition, the personalities of each performer and the different layers they cover themselves with, along with the intentions of the performer play another role in having the line between each stage blurred.

1.2 Arriving at the research question

Punch (2005) discusses two general ways of getting to the research questions. The first one begins with data collection and moves to the specific research question, passing through the research topic and the general research questions. The second one takes the other way around, starting with a very specific question and moving to data collection. I know for a fact that my quest for the research question started as very general and wide, more than 15 years ago at the time when I was doing my Master degree in Business Administration (MBA), when I came across the work of Bolman & Deal (1997). In their work; *Reframing Organisations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*: the authors offer four frames or lenses through which they argue that managers can develop greater appreciation and deeper understanding of organisations. Those frames are;

1. The structural frame where the metaphor for organisation is a factory or a machine and the central concepts are rules, roles, goals, and policies.
2. The human resource frame where the metaphor for organisation is an extended family and the central concepts are needs, skills, and relationships.

3. The political frame where the metaphor for organisation is jungle and the central concepts are power, conflict, competition, and organisational politics.

4. The symbolic frame where the metaphor for organisation is a theatre or a temple and the central concepts are culture, ritual, ceremonies, stories, and heroes.

Using those frames as a practitioner for more than 15 years intrigued me to deep dive and understand more about those frames and in particular the symbolic one, where the metaphor of an organisation is a theatre and managers are actors. With witnessing those frames in my day to day engagements in work, I was fascinated and wanted to understand them even more. This drive became bigger and bigger with every new discovery of how such frames play an important role in understanding people behaviours in organisations. Hence, this became the area that I decided to research when I joined the DBA programme. However, my research question at that time was not there yet. Moreover, in the first two years of the programme I was very much reading and developing my understanding about metaphors. Later, in the journey and after my discussions with my supervisor, I started narrowing my areas of interest and accordingly my research question, which introduced me to dramaturgy as an area of research.

In a nutshell I wanted to explore and learn the way self-presentation and role playing in an organisation can impact many elements such as staff relationships, managing people, and change management. Understanding

that each of the above area needs a thesis by itself; I started narrowing down my questions focusing on dramaturgy and its role in change management. The topic of change management is seen to be useful for SOMC as part of a multinational organisation, namely Shell, because the latter continuously works on implementing new organisational structures and programmes in different areas and class of businesses in more than 70 countries it operates within. The topic is also seen to be useful for the managers in SOMC who continuously are expected to manage change programmes within the organisation. Moreover, the topic is also seen as an important one to the staff members who are expected to develop the way they work or operate due to those continuous changes in the organisation structure, programmes, products, services and or even management styles within the organisation.

Hence, the primary question of this research is:

What is the role, impact and potential of dramaturgy in change management in Shell Oman Marketing Company?

In addressing the primary question, the research will also cover the following secondary questions:

- I. What is seen as front stage performance in SOMC?
- II. What are backstage performances in SOMC?
- III. Are there clear boundaries between front stage and backstage?
- IV. Are the boundaries blurred?

V. What are the consequences when there are no clear boundaries between front stage and backstage?

VI. Do boundaries need to be managed in some way?

VII. Is it helpful to give multiple actors access to backstage performances?

VIII. What makes a specific performance better than another?

IX. What are the supporting tools that help a performer in his play/act/performance?

X. How do change agents feel about the performance/act?

XI. Are there resistances to performances from change agents?

XII. What is the impact of these front stage performance and backstage performance in the organisation? Do they cause conflict or distress?

1.3 The aims and objectives of the research

The aims and objectives are to explore and understand the role of change behaviour, which is part of the identity of the organisation and of everyday life and to understand how dramaturgy can impact, whether positively or negatively, staff members and in particular on their behaviour inside the office in relation to change programmes.

The context of the case study – change management – is potentially useful for SOMC as part of a multinational organisation, namely Shell. The latter continuously works on implementing new organisational structures and programmes in different areas and class of businesses in more than 70 countries it operates within. The findings from the study will be useful for SOMC managers who are expected to continuously manage change programmes within the organisation. Moreover, the topic is important to the staff members who are expected to develop the way they work or operate due to those continuous changes in the structures, programmes, and or even management styles within the organisation. The results can be extended to change management programmes in other organisations. I propose that dramaturgy is important in managing change effectively because it provides an alternative to the application of rational models and techniques by highlighting the interactive nature of change – the nature of actions and how meanings are created between actors and audience. It is therefore interesting for me being the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organisation to examine how dramaturgy can help drive successful change programmes in SOMC and mobilise people to act and work differently and to take on different roles or adopt a different way of work. Also, it is important to understand how dramaturgy can have an impact, whether positively or negatively, on staff members in change management programmes and in particular on staff attitudes and behaviour inside the office.

1.4 Contribution to practice

One of the main objectives of this research is to offer an insight to practitioners related to employing dramaturgy in change management programmes. The research is expected to be of benefit to top executives in organisations, change agents, business managers and others who implement and manage change in organisations. This research on dramaturgy is expected to make a contribution by:

- I. Improving the successful implementation of change by offering a new dimension to change management. With ongoing changes that constantly happen in SOMC, there is a critical need for insights and tools that will better help successful change management.
- II. Helping managers develop new skills relating to change management.
- III. Developing tools and approaches based on dramaturgy that will contribute to successful change management.
- IV. Encouraging practitioners to apply this work in their organisations and further develop it.

1.5 Contribution to academic work

This research attempts to explore the impact of dramaturgy in change management in SOMC. There are currently no studies on this topic neither in

Shell nor in Oman. However, the literature review shows a number of studies conducted with relation to applying dramaturgy in change management. For instance, (Badham *et al*, 2015, Boje *et al*, 2012, McCormick, 2007).

This thesis contributes to the existing literature on dramaturgy in change management by generating empirical evidence of a link between dramaturgy and successful change management. This will add to the existing research and theory conducted in this area by offering new theoretical insights that will enrich discussion and encourage further research.

This research identifies a number of themes that can be added to the existing literature. The study highlighted the importance of 'Alignment' as a way of explaining the work that goes on in backstage and front stage performances, much part of living organisations. The term found extensively in organisational life at SOMC and many other organisations. Backstage meeting often has the goal of aligning participants to the message that has to be conveyed – the coordinated front stage performance. Therefore, alignment is a key element of the rehearsals and practices for the frontstage performances, and in bringing together the supporting team and loyalists. The idea of backstage alignment meetings is for the change agents and the management team to share their perspectives, challenge each other's viewpoint (in case they are different), agree among themselves on the approach or the message that needs to go out to the stakeholders as well as prepare for any challenges or questions expected to be raised in the frontstage. This may also include the language used and even the sequence of the communication.

Another contribution of this research that is not available in other studies is that the importance of context and culture. That although metaphors and storytelling are used in many organisations across the world, they resonate particularly with Omanis because they are part of their history and culture. Hence using storytelling and metaphors in performances in SOMC can have a huge help connecting the audience with the performance.

1.6 Cultural overview

The case study of the thesis will be taken from SOMC, which is a Joint venture of Shell in Oman. As a JV; SOMC adopts all Shell global practices, systems and guidelines. Also, staff members have clear local and regional reporting lines. While SOMC operates similarly like any other Shell operating unit worldwide, the organisation has its distinction operating in Oman for the last 60 years. Around 90% of its workforce are Omani nationals. Hence, it is relevant to highlight the cultural overview of Oman, and its importance to the organisation behaviour. This local culture in this context clusters the language, the believes, the values, and the social customs and traditions.

Oman has existed as a distinctive nation for several thousand years. It is located on the south-eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It shares land borders with United Arab Emirates to the northwest, Saudi Arabia to the west, Yemen, to the south west, and shares marine borders with Iran and Pakistan. The coast is formed by the Arabian sea on the southeast and the Gulf of Oman on the northeast.

From the late 17th century, the Omani Sultanate was a powerful empire vying with Portugal and Britain for influence in the Arabian/Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. At its peak in the 19th century, Omani influence or control extended across the Strait of Hormuz to modern-day Iran and Pakistan and as far south as Zanzibar. Historically, Mutrah port in Muscat city (the capital of Oman) was the principal trading port of the Arabian/Persian Gulf region. It was also among the most important trading ports of the Indian Ocean. Gutberlet (2016) explains that due to its commercial activities, Mutrah had a multi ethnic population where most of its inhabitants migrated to Oman in the past, and historically the multi ethnic population of Mutrah has been welcoming and open to tourists. Oman's geographical location along with its political influence between the late 17th century and the mid-20th century had its influence on the culture of Oman not only by enriching it but also in becoming a nation that is proud of its beliefs and traditions yet accepts and respects other cultures and tolerant to other groups. This is also nourished by the peaceful coexistence policy led by the current Sultan for the last nearly half a century. For instance, Oman culture is steeped in the religion of Islam. While, Oman has developed its own subsect of Islam, known as Ibadism, other strands of Islam such as Sunni and Shi'a are also practiced and it's very natural in Oman to see Omanis from the three different strands of Islam practicing their prayers in the same mosque and having cross tribal and cross strands marriages. Due to its strong link to Islam and the Holy Quran, which uses metaphors and storytelling approach in many of its chapters, storytelling became a strong part of the social customs and traditions of Oman.

This was also largely used by Omanis who used to travel for trading or education in the past to describe their experiences and the places they visited. The religion, the geographical location, and the historical background have all played a major role in influencing and shaping the culture of Oman. The set of values that can best describe the Omanis are mainly driven from their religion of Islam of peaceful coexistence, honesty, respect, and tolerance. These set of values are very important to demonstrate when engaging with people. They can be expressed either verbally or through a body language depending on the audience and the situation.

1.7 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces and gives an overview of the research, including how the research questions were developed. It also highlights the research aims and objectives along with the expected contribution to both academic and practitioners' world.

Chapter 2 dives into the literature review of dramaturgy. It commences with a historical background of dramaturgy, then analyses the main pillars, themes and perspectives of dramaturgy as well as it's challenges and limitations. It also highlights the main models in planning, analysing, and managing change. The chapter then addresses the literature on studies using dramaturgy, as well as the implications of dramaturgy for studying organisations and change. Following that, the chapter then discusses using tools such as metaphors and storytelling in dramaturgy to manage changes in organisations.

Chapter 3 covers research methodology. The chapter starts by explaining the research philosophy, then discusses the case study methodology and answers the five questions related to data gathering; *who?*, *where?*, *when?*, *why?* and *how?*. The chapter also discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the data gathering methods adopted in this research, namely; semi structured interviews and observations. It also exhibits the methods of analysing data.

Chapter 4 discusses ethical issues related to the research. This covers the ethical concerns relate to the stage prior to conducting the research, during the data gathering, as well as the stage post the data collection.

The findings from the data gathering process through both the interviews and the observation have been outlined and discussed over two chapters.

Chapter 5 covers the themes related to front stage and backstage and the boundaries between each, while chapter 6 covers the themes related to the performances and the performers skill, style, and competencies.

Chapter 7 presents the contributions of the research and makes practical recommendations. Finally, Chapter 8 covers my personal reflections on carrying out this research as well as my overall reflections throughout the DBA journey.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I will begin by defining dramaturgy from both its theatre related meaning as well as from the sociological perspective. This will be followed by an overview of how dramaturgy has been conceived and developed generally and in relation to organisation and management studies. In particular, the work of Goffman (1956) was examined along with other literature that critically reviewed Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, laid down challenges or offered new dimensions. Following that, the implications of dramaturgy for studying change in organisations will be explored and two examples are critically reviewed. Because the context of the research is change management, I will also review related theories and tools. In the latter part of this chapter, connects the two topics by exploring studies of dramaturgy in change management.

2.1 Dramaturgy

2.1.1 *Definition*

It is believed that the word 'dramaturgy' originated from an ancient Greek word (drama) meaning action. This has been derived from a verb that means *to do* or *to act*. The two traditional masks associated with drama – tragedy and comedy – are believed to be symbols of the Greek muses Thalia, who is represented by the laughing face, and Melpomene who is represented by the weeping face. In English, the word 'play' was the equivalent term that is used to describe drama.

Similarly, the term 'play maker' was used to describe the dramatist, and the theatre was referred to as 'play house'. The word dramaturgy can lead to two perspectives. The first defines the terminology from a theatre-related meaning in which dramaturgy is defined as the craft/study/practice of dramatic composition and the representation of the main elements of drama on stage, (<http://dictionary.reference.com>, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>). Aristotle's poetics in the 4th Century BC are considered the first western attempt to define the rules of a well-structured drama (Romanska, 2016). The second perspective looks at the terminology from a sociological lens, where dramaturgy refers to the social interaction in everyday life. Most of the dramaturgy literature in the social sciences refers to Erving Goffman as first adapting this term from the theatre to sociology, (e.g., Brown, 2005, Cunliffe, 2014, Höpfl, 2002), adopting the idea 'that we are all actors engaged in ongoing performances of the real' (Cunliffe, 2014, p.61). Goffman (1956, p. 152) argues that 'within the wall of social establishment we find a team of performers who cooperate to present to an audience a given definition of the situation. This will include the conception of own team and of audience and assumptions concerning the ethos that is to be maintained by rules of politeness and decorum'. From a sociological perspective the study of dramaturgy requires that time, place, and audience are key elements to consider.

2.1.2 Historical review

It is difficult to say when drama was first used. Many theories suggest that drama was first used in ancient times by primitive tribal men who performed before their people after coming back from their hunting trips. Through their performance they were trying to recreate the events they experienced when they were away. Drama is also found in many works of Plato and Aristotle, and developed further in the Middle Ages, with the theatrical plays of Shakespeare considered to be living works still relevant to today. Romanska (2016) refers to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing as the father of modern dramaturgy due to his influential work, *Hamburg Dramaturgy* that was written while employed as the world's first dramaturg at Hamburg National Theatre in the 18th century. Moving forward, drama continued to be used as a way to express social, political and economic ideas and situations, more recently aided by new technologies that present drama to a larger audience through different forms and means. Inventions like radio, cinema, and television were means to present drama outside theatres, supported in recent years by computers, laptops, tablets, and smart phones which are used by many to watch different sorts of performances. Even in theatres, drama witnessed revolutions in the way it is being presented. It is being presented in musicals and opera shows in order to attract different generations and tastes to the plays.

Despite this long history, it was only in the 20th century that drama was explored from sociological and organisational points of view. In 1945 Kenneth Burke

developed *dramatism* (a model that compares life to a drama) and a method to analyse human relationships. From a Burkian perspective (1969), life is a drama understood through the motive of actors (people). He introduced a pentad, five questions to be asked to understand the motive: the act, the scene, the agent, the agency, and the purpose. In other words, the What? Where? Who? How, and Why? These questions are important in organisations because they help to explain the actions of staff members and to find the motivations of activities.

While Burke (1969) looked at life as a theatre, Goffman (1956) looked at theatre as a metaphor. In 1956 Goffman introduced *dramaturgy*, a theatrical representation of life. He breaks the presentation of self into two: front stage performance and backstage performance. The front stage performance is where people act out their best performance in front of an audience of at least one person. The objective of this performance is for the audience to actually perceive the actors in the way they are trying to present themselves. Backstage performance is where actors discuss and refine their performance without revealing themselves to their audience. Each of the stages consists of several pillars that have been covered in many works. For instance, Beckerman (1990) identifies four main pillars of front stage performances: (a) a stage where the performance takes place, (b) a performance that gets delivered, (c) a performer who impersonates a specific character(s), and (d) an audience who the performance gets delivered to.

Alternatively, Greener (2007) lists three pillars of a backstage performance: (a) behind the scenes (concealed) preparations, (b) performers meet with supporting team (crew) to prepare, (c) and a rehearsal and a practice of the performance to remove errors. Building on Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, many research has enriched the literature of dramaturgy in organisational life. In order to better understand and test the above pillars, a number of tools, themes and perspectives have been identified and even challenged by researchers (e.g., Biehl-Missal, 2011, Cornelissen, 2004, Darr & Pinch, 2013, Greener, 2007, Höpfl, 2002, Lewin & Reeves, 2011, Rosengren, 2015).

If we accept Goffman's theory of dramaturgy as a way of explaining everyday organisational life, then two important questions are raised: what makes a specific performance/act better than another in an organisational context? And, what supporting tools, if any, help a performer in his or her play/act/performance in a change management context? These questions connect with this research primary and secondary questions and literature review.

2.1.3 Analysis of the themes and perspectives

Organisation as a theatre appeared in many works. (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 1997, Biehl, 2008, Biehl-Missal, 2011, Cornelissen, 2004, Darr & Pinch, 2013) Most of these works revolve around Goffman's perspective of dramaturgy. Goffman (1956) identified a number of techniques that are the foundation for a successful performance:

dramaturgical loyalty (the loyalty of a performer's team), dramaturgical discipline (the performer's ability to stay in the character), and dramaturgical circumspection (the judgement of the handlers in the careful staging of a show to minimize the risks and mute the effects of performer mistakes or blunders). Below I analyse the main themes and perspectives from the literature that relate to my research questions, categorised them under the different pillars of front stage and backstage performance.

2.1.3.1. Pillars of front stage performance:

a. The Stage

The stage in this context refers to the physical location where front stage performance takes place. Goffman (1956, p. preface) views the stage as presenting 'things that are make-believe; presumably life presents things that are real and sometimes not well rehearsed'. The importance of the stage in the success of the performance has been highlighted in many works. (e.g., Badham *et al*, 2015, Biehl-Missal, 2011, Brown, 2005, Morgan, 2006). For instance, Brown (2005) argues that good acting is not the only requirement relevant to effective performance but there are other elements also, including an artful stage management. The themes and perspectives related to the stage that are derived from the literature mainly cover the physical boundaries of front stage (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016) and the way the performers

can take advantage of the stage including building an aesthetic experience to help them deliver their performance in a convincing way (e.g., Biehl-Missal, 2011, Höpfl, 2002, Kowzan, 1968, Morgan, 2006). For instance, Morgan (2006 p.184) argues that 'Many organisational members are also keenly aware of the way in which theatre— including physical settings, appearances, and styles of behaviour— can add to their power, and many deserve organisational Oscars for their performances'. In the same sense Biehl-Missal (2011) argues that although many dramaturgical studies have successfully applied theatre vocabulary to organisational life, they have provided few insights into the dynamic of aesthetic experiences. She argues that there is a need for a methodological lens that is able to account for the aesthetic experience of a performance in an organisation such as lighting, carefully designed settings, clothing, the managers' performance style, and audience interaction, 'Business is show business, and managers at large-scale events do not 'play' or 'act', but 'perform', they are performers, making use of the genuine theatre techniques such as bright lighting and carefully designed setting and creating an aesthetic experience. It is the performance which creates meaning, not a speech manuscript, but the way in which managers act in, and interact with a specific surrounding' (Biehl-Missal, 2011, p.621). Thus, aesthetic experience is important because the way dramaturgy is employed in organisations can control and influence the behaviours of employee and external audiences. Moreover, these aesthetic experiences, which co-create the theatrical performance of large-scale management presentations such as annual general meetings and press conferences, can have an impact on the firm's reputation and the potential for resistance, change, and persuasion.

b. The performance

The performance in this context refers to the front stage performance that gets delivered to the audience. In other words, it is the style or the way through which the message of the performer is delivered or presented. Goffman (1956, p.8) defines a performance as: 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants'. In a change context, this performance is required to provide the audience with an impression consistent with the desired goals of the change. The importance of a script for the performance is one of the themes that has been highlighted by many authors (e.g., Biehl-Missel, 2001, Cornelissen, 2004, Cunliffe, 2014, Darr & Pinch, 2013). For instance, Cornelissen (2004) argues that the script should offer a plot that the manager as actor can develop and perfect his or her own craft. The literature also shows the importance of using metaphors and storytelling, narratives, and symbols as tools during the performance to connect employees to organisational culture and practice. The use of metaphors (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 1997, Cornelissen, 2004, Cunliffe, 2014, Morgan, 2006) and storytelling in organisations (e.g., Badham *et al*, 2015, Boje, 1995, Dar & Pinch, 2013) especially in change management context (e.g., Akin & Palmer, 2000, Armenakis & Bedeian, 1992, Cleary & Packard, 1992, Küpers, 2013, Oztel & Hinz, 2001) is covered in more details in the coming parts of this chapter, along with a review of their challenges and the limitations.

c. The performer

The performer in this context refers to the individual (a manager or a change agent) who either solely or jointly with other team members presents a performance to the audience. Balkin (2013) argues that the performer's obligation is to put a text into action before an audience and to do that the performer needs to possess or demonstrate a set of skills and competencies to be able to deliver a successful performance that gets buy-in from the audience. In particular, 'the performer uses a range of factors such as gestures, voice and the interplay of the stage design to constitute a certain persona' (Biehl, 2008, p.524). Goffman (1956) highlights the importance of maintaining expression control throughout the performance, while we move from one frame to another (primary to secondary) or (primary to key). He argues that a successful performer is the one who carefully maintains his dramaturgical discipline over his or her performance. In his work, *Acting Presidential: The Dramaturgy of Bush Versus Kerry*, Brown (2005) applied Goffman theory on political communication on a business case of Bush versus Kerry, United States presidential campaign. He gives an example of Kerry, who at the time of accepting his nomination from the Democratic Party was moving from his primary frame as a naval officer to a secondary or arguably (key) frame as a presidential candidate. Yet he clearly maintained his expression control while moving from one frame to another at the time of nomination which was broadcasted live on the television. It can be argued that having persuasive skills

is one of the main competencies that the performer should possess and utilise in order to be able to get buy-in from the audience, especially in a performance that relates to change management. This has been covered in many works including Biehl-Missal (2011), Cornelissen (2004), and Harvey (2001). For instance, Harvey (2001) highlights the rhetorical skills and the power of persuasion used by charismatic leaders to generate a sense of drama with their audience. This supports Goffman (1956) argument on the importance of the arts of influence and persuasion.

Personal values of the performer such as sincerity and authenticity are elements that need to be felt and perceived by the audience. These have been highlighted in many works as important tools to get acceptance and buy-in from the audience. (e.g., Edwards, 2010, Henderson 2015). Henderson (2015) argues that the authentic leader is distinguished by elements of self-accountability and perceived non-manipulation by his followers, and a personal salience of self-role. It can be argued that these are very important elements for the performer's (manager or change agent) representation of self in order to be accepted and (believed) by the audience (staff members). Body language is another issue that has been extensively covered in dramaturgy. There are many works on the importance of being able to use body language in the performance. (e.g., Bishop, 1985, Brown, 2005, Conbere & Herohiadi, 2006, Gabbott & Hogg, 2000, , Rixon *et al*, 2006, Row, 2015). For instance, Bishop (1985), argues that non-

verbal aspects in communication are vital and that audiences react to such aspects including elements such as the performer's attitude and hand gestures. Looking at service as drama, Gabbott & Hogg (2000), carried out an empirical investigation of the impact of non-verbal communications on service evaluation, arguing that there are three specific variables impacting the nature of non-verbal communication during the performance, gender, cultural norms and gained behaviours, and personal characteristics. They bring in an interesting argument about managers who believe that body language is sometimes beyond their control. Gabbott & Hogg (2000) argue that managers need to recognise and accept that non-verbal communications will inevitably take place and that it has a huge effect on both customers and employees. Many studies have also highlighted the importance for the performer to be able to understand the audience's body language (e.g., Dallas, 2015, Heim, 2016, Wood, 2005). For instance, Heim (2016) argues that most of the audience communication such as utterances and kinetic performances like gestures or even walk-aways have a huge impact on the performers while the performance is running, and many of the kinetic performance and facial expressions can give an indication of the attention of the audience to the performance. The connection with the audience is one of the goals that the performer desires to achieve. Through this connection the performer gets one step closer to getting his or her message delivered.

It is also argued that using the right tools to connect with the audience can impact the result of the performance (e.g., Balkin, 2013, Kaifi, 2011, Maxwell, 2010, Rixon *et al*, 2006). Balkin (2013, p.1689) argues that 'the interactions between the members of the audience and the performer may affect how performers behave and subtly or profoundly shape the result. That is why live performance can often be so different from pre-recorded or televised performance in terms of energy, spontaneity, and emotional connection'. The use of metaphors and storytelling in the performance can therefore be very effective tools in helping the performer send out the desired message to the audience. This supports many studies of metaphors (e.g., Akin & Palmer, 2000, Aremenakis & Bedeian, 1992, Cleary & Packard, 1992, Cornelissen, 2004, Küpers, 2013, Palmer & Dunford, 1996, Rixon *et al*, 2006) and storytelling in performance. (e.g., Badham *et al*, 2015, Boje, 1995, Dar & Pinch, 2013). The use of metaphor and storytelling in the performance is extensively covered in the later parts of this chapter. The above tools need many skills, competencies and preparations from the performer to be able to utilize and demonstrate them. Brown (2005) argues that preparations need skilful and passionate protection of the performance by partisans and handlers. This supports Goffman (1956) argument on the importance of other team members who support the performer through their dramaturgical performance (loyalty).

d. The audience

The audience in this context refers to the staff and the stakeholders to whom the front stage performance is delivered. Apart from being a very important pillar of front stage, the audience is very powerful element that can determine whether the performance is successful or not. Moreover, the audience presence or absence in front stage or backstage can have an implication on running that particular stage or change the stage from one to another in a split of a second. For instance, Ekstrand & Dammand (2016) argue that backstage location can be turned into a front stage once one of the audience walks in. On the other hand, a rehearsal (backstage) can happen in the actual location of the front stage when the audience are not around.

The audience interacts with the performance in many ways. For instance, clapping, booing, or silence (Biehl-Missal, 2011; Heim, 2016). They can also walk away while the performance is running to reflect their dissatisfaction, boredom, or disappointment from the performance and so influence the performance (Heim, 2016). Collishaw *et al*, (2008) and Henderson (2015) argue that managers may lose their audience in the organisation if the same audience sees them performing backstage and it happened that the two performances were not consistent or even completely different. Bishop (1985) argues that an audience can detect falseness immediately. In terms of aesthetic interaction and control, Biehl-Missal (2011) suggest that researchers can develop the results

and the framework to explore shareholders' performative (clapping, booing, silence) and rhetorical resistance strategies. Therefore, two-way communication in the performance not only connects the audience to the performer (e.g., Balkin, 2013), but also builds a perception within the audience that they are valued and respected (Belal, 2011; Maxwell, 2010).

2.1.3.2 Pillars of backstage performance

Goffman (1956, p.69) defines backstage performance 'as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course. There are, of course, many characteristic functions of such places. It is here that the capacity of a performance to express something beyond itself may be painstakingly fabricated; it is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed'.

a. Concealed preparations

The core element in backstage performance is that it is concealed. Concealed preparations in this context means that they are kept away from the audience, and access is limited to the performers and the support team (the crew). Greener, (2007, p.286) emphasise on the cruciality of this in his definition of backstage interactions. He argues that these interactions 'take place behind the scenes and involve hidden preparation that allows actors to carry off idealized presentations of their selves. Concealment is crucial here, as it allows the

process of preparation to be hidden, so that performances may be practised and, where possible, errors removed. Backstage work also allows the discussion of performances that might discredit the one planned by the team'. The main reason for concealed preparations is rehearsing the character actors play in the front stage - giving access to the audience to backstage may reveal the actor's true character and impact their credibility and buy-in from the audience of their onstage character. Brown (2005) gives an example of the risks of someone from the audience having access to backstage through Michael Moore's use of the candid film footage of President Bush driving a golf ball in an apparently cavalier manner a few days after September 11. The footage was used later by Kerry loyalists as a discrediting element during the 2004 United States presidential campaign of Bush versus Kerry.

b. Rehearsals and preparations

Rehearsals in this context refer to the practice of the roles and the refining and mastering of the performance, as well as removing errors and inconsistencies. Many studies argue that backstage performance is mainly dedicated to preparations and rehearsals of the personalities and the characters people would like to impersonate in the front stage (e.g., Brown, 2005, Cunliffe, 2014, Goffman, 1956, Greener, 2007). The rehearsals phase also includes preparations for the performance and the discussions among the performers on the challenges related to the performance. Cunliffe (2014) gives an example of an organisation introducing a new management information

system, where the backstage performance may include discussions between the managers about the problems of the new system and the doubts about it ever working. However, it is not only the performers who rehearse and prepare, the audience may also do so. Goffman (1956, p.1) argues that 'when an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him'. Audience preparations come also in forms of getting information about the performance itself which arguably can sometimes build anticipation and excitement. Heim (2016) argues that audience members may read their programme or share what they know of the upcoming production all in preparation for the performance.

c. Supporting team/ crew/ loyalists

Brown (2005) argues that a successful performance depends on dramaturgical loyalty, in other words, the loyalty of a performer's team, and that along with the actor, the dramaturgical loyalist must take pains to avoid gaffes that reduce their credibility. Citing Dale (1941), Goffman (1956) illustrates the importance of the supporting team members to the performance bringing an example of Cabinet

Committee meetings, where in such committees, civil servants share, discuss and express their views freely yet not directly oppose their own Minister. He argues that the possibility of such disagreement to happen in the front stage is very rare and is ought never to arise, and that in nine cases out of ten the Minister and the civil servant who attends the committee with him have agreed beforehand what line is to be taken, and in the tenth case, the civil servant who disagree with the Minister's point of view on a particular point will stay away from that particular meeting.

Brown (2005) offers a number of examples of the role of the supporting team in helping the performers in their performance. For instance, citing Gourevitch (2004), Brown (2005) gives an example where Kerry in his staging performance surrounded himself with Vietnam war heroes to help him portray himself as a Vietnam veteran. The supporting team can support the performance from a distance and without being physically on stage or sitting with the crowds. In her work, *Business is Show Business: Management Presentation as Performance*, Biehl-Missal (2011) demonstrates the importance of aesthetic techniques in organisations. These techniques such as stage properties, stage design, lighting, sounds, smell, etc. require a lot of work and preparations by the performers team members (crew) who in most cases prepare this in the backstage and manage it without coming or appearing onstage themselves. To ensure specific impression by the audience, the performers keep the crew and their preparations part of the backstage where they are not visible to the

audience. Clark & Salaman (1998) argue that the conduct of any performance is associated with a considerable degree of risk, danger and uncertainty. 'Should the veil drop and the 'back-stage' be revealed to the audience, the performer is exposed with the consequence that the audience may reconceptualise the role of the performer.? Hence, all performances involve risk since a crack may appear at any moment which permits the audience a glimpse of the back-stage. To use a theatrical example, there is a constant danger that the scenery may collapse at any time to reveal the back-stage crew working the pulleys, trapdoors and other mechanisms which are used to maintain a sense of reality and the quality naturalness". Clark & Salaman (1998, p.27).

2.1.3.3 Boundaries between backstage and front stage

Many recent studies of dramaturgy (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Darr & Pinch, 2013, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016, Ellingson, 2003) argue that the boundaries between backstage and front stage are not always clear. The moment there is more than one person in the event, the boundaries start getting blurred. What is seen as a backstage performance to one may be looked at as a front stage to another. This can even be the case despite that both individuals may be change agents or change recipients. Goffman (1956) argues that while performers cannot hide things from one another that they hide from the audience, they still do keep some strategic secrets from one another. Also, the physical location of the performance cannot be a clear distinguisher between each of the stages.

Backstage location can be turned into a front stage once one of the audiences walks in. On the other hand, a rehearsal (backstage) can happen in the actual location of the front stage when the audience are not around (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016). For instance, Goffman (1956) argues that there are many regions which function at one time and in one sense as a front region and at another time and in another sense as a back region. He gives an example of a private office of an executive, where it serves as front region where his status in the organisation is expressed through the quality of the office furnishing. Yet, it is in the same office where he takes his jacket off, loosen his tie and act in a friendly way with his fellow executives of his own rank. Moreover, Ashforth *et al* (2008) argue that the blurred boundaries between front stage and backstage creates struggle within the individuals, between their performance in their jobs and their personalities of who they actually are. This becomes even more challenging if the job requires a constant specific performance in dealing with customers for instance. This example of blurred boundaries between front stage and backstage can raise ethical dilemmas and emotional conflicts within the individuals who might start feel that they are insincere and manipulators. (See Challenges and limitations of dramaturgy in 2.1.5)

2.1.4 Implications of dramaturgy for studying organisations and change

The literature offers good number of case studies on the implications of dramaturgy for studying organisations and change. There are success stories as well as cases of failures, from either organisations and managers can learn.

Most significantly, these examples exhibit the important role that dramaturgy can play in an organisation. Below are two critical reviews of two works that use dramaturgy in organisations. In their work; *Committed to a failing strategy: celebrity CEO, intermediaries, media and stakeholders in a co-created drama*, Sinha *et al* (2012) share a detailed analysis of the organisational leadership and the types of leaders that exist focusing on the celebrity CEO. The paper argues that an organisation's CEO gains celebrity status whenever media houses talk about such an organisation considering positive factors relating to the firm. Appointing a celebrity CEO enables the organisation to signal to stakeholders that its prospects are bright, thereby engendering investor confidence. The paper uses dramaturgical perspective to analyse a case study of Air New Zealand's failed acquisition of Australia's Ansett Airlines in 2011, which resulted in the biggest corporate loss in the country's history. The discussion tries to develop an understanding of different questions regarding celebrity CEOs, and the influence of dramas created by the media on the performance of the CEOs and eventually the performance of the organisation. From a critical point of view, the work of Sinha *et al* (2012) executed the topic of dramaturgy in the context of organisational leaders' behaviours effectively, using case study methodology. The case illustrates how the drama unfolded as a series of performances co-created by the celebrity CEO, top management, the media, financial intermediaries and other stakeholders. The paper carried out an extensive literature research on the topic and applied it to the case study where a celebrity CEO was deceived into making wrong decisions that led to failure. For instance, there is a discussion on

the differences between celebrity CEOs responses and normal CEOs. Different beliefs were discussed on how celebrity CEOs behave due to their attitudes towards success which is based on their past successes. The authors were clear on these differences, and they were all based on these CEOs attitudes towards issues. However, one interesting factor is how co-created dramas influence celebrity CEOs. In this case, the CEO was influenced by the dramas created by his press and believed that he would raise up to the current challenge which he did not anticipate could affect his reputation later. His belief of being in control also led him into making a decision that led to failure. While business celebrity is a phenomenon that receives legitimacy because of the sustained efforts and cooperation from self-interested players, he or she can also rapidly lose support due to similar inputs from those players. Simply said, support for the celebrity's leadership can lead to the escalation of commitment to a failing strategy that does not guarantee success. Different scholars have discussed leadership issues and how they can impact the organisation through their influence and character that they develop through the media. Much as celebrity CEOs can have the relevant skills to execute tasks, at times, they may fail because of overconfidence, and this has been elaborated from the study that was discussed in the paper. The paper is mindful of its limitation related to not being able to get face-to-face data related to the case and the absence of an insider. Hence, the findings of the aforesaid paper may be different to what is known by the performers.

In another example of using dramaturgy for studying organisations and change, Robinson & Schulz (2016) use Goffman's theory of dramaturgy in the development of a tool called Iterated Questioning Approach (IQA) technique for use in interviews. Addressing what they see as the flaws in traditional ways of conducting interviews, particularly inaccurate information from interviewees, they argue that dramaturgy can enhance interviews by encouraging the interviewee to give information that is reluctantly given in a normal interviewing process. There are different perspectives from which a person presents him or herself whenever they are being engaged. In order to get more information from such people, the interviewers should take into account that there are front stage and backstage presentations of self. The authors develop four vital steps that are needed in the process of using IQA in an interview: 1. establish the baseline iterated question; 2. elicit frontstage talk; 3. go backstage by sharing visceral narratives and 4. elicit backstage talk. All these steps are necessary in ensuring that the interview is successful in delivering relevant information required from the interviewee. The authors argue that all interviewers using the IQA should follow all four steps to attain the required results.

From a critical point of view, the work of Robinson & Schulz (2016) is a good example of how the theory of dramaturgy can be used to develop tools to help generate insights about people and their behaviour. They argue that the IQA interviewing technique leads to more accurate results from interviews conducted by researchers, and offers significant advantages compared with conventional interviewing procedures. The technique draws on Goffman's dramaturgical idea

of backstage and front-stage performances and the authors develop a convincing argument that there are many strengths supporting the use of this technique in ensuring that the right information is received from interviewees. They critique different interview approaches and offer IQA implementation strategies to generate more meaningful information from interviewees, arguing that IQA is an effective interviewing technique that delivers legitimate results and a better sense of interviewee personalities. Such strategies involve: standard interview practices, maintaining rapport, and considering different personalities and different ages. IQA integrates Pugh's (2013) insights into honourable and visceral narratives with Goffman's dramaturgical concepts of frontstage and backstage and enables interviewers to formulate replicable questions that predictably elicit frontstage and backstage talk. IQA is therefore seen as critical in ensuring that all the required information about interviewees is available through accessing the frontstage and backstage issues.

In summary, the article was quite detailed and insightful in giving information about how dramaturgy can improve interviews and how they can be conducted to generate more accurate data.

2.1.5 Challenges and limitations of dramaturgy

Performances can come with a cost. Referring to the work of Hochschild on Delta Airline flight attendants, Cunliffe (2014) gives an example of the flight attendants who were trained to act out required emotions and had to deal with emotions and ethical dilemmas relating to the feeling that they were insincere and fake.

Cunliffe (2014) also gives a similar example of *emotional labour* related to her daughter, who was working as a bank teller. She was told by her manager that she needs to smile more 'authentically' and project the 'wow' factor to clients, something her daughter felt was inauthentic and could not do. The same appears in the work of Höpfl (2002) who refers to Diderot's comparison between acting and whoring in a service occupation. She argues that there is a psychological cost to employees that is attached to this type of performance. Thus, "the chief limitations of the dramaturgical model are that it excites the invalid inferences that offstage "roles" are more like stage actors' roles than they really are, and that the person is nothing but these "roles". The differences between onstage and offstage behaviour are kept in view when the metaphorical concept of "role playing" is re-connected to its source in role playing onstage" (Wilshire, 1982 p.287). Cunliffe (2014 p.63) argues that the different roles and personalities that appear of the same person between his onstage performance as a manager in an organisation and offstage performance in his relationship 'raises the question as to whether managers who are good actors are being savvy manipulators and disingenuous in their relationship? From a managerialist perspective, impression management is just part of the repertoire of tools available to ensure the achievement of organisational goals. From a critical perspective it can be about faking emotions and identity'. This perception may backfire and managers may lose their audience in the organisation if the same audience sees them performing offstage and it happened that the two performances were not consistent or even completely different.

This was also captured as a finding from the interviews of this research. (see Chapter 6). This raises the challenge of how people manage the interface between their roles in their organisation and themselves as individuals, and perhaps problems when the boundaries between front stage and backstage are blurred. For instance, Ashforth *et al* (2008) studied 105 service agents from different occupations who represent their organisations in customer transactions in order to understand how service agents manage the interface between their roles in their organisations interacting with customers and being themselves as individuals. They concluded that service agents use transition rituals, boundary markers, and psychological preparation to enter and exit their service roles, often finding it difficult to maintain their objectivity and to minimize inter-role blurring; are very aware of being on stage. They also reported that service agents often found it difficult to maintain their objectivity and found that the distinction between client and friend sometimes blurred. They argue that that such challenges are ongoing and dynamic, especially as boundaries between backstage and front stage become blurred, objectivity is compromised, front stage events spill over to the backstage, and so on. This argument supports Goffman's (1956) view who argued that there is a symbiotic relationship between front stage and backstage, where the tensions of maintaining the role in front can be knowingly contradicted in back.

2.2 Change Management

'In describing the General Motors organisation, I hope I have not left an impression that I think it is a finished product. No company ever stops changing. Change will come for better or worse. I also hope I have not left an impression that the organisation runs itself automatically. An organisation does not make decisions; its function is to provide a framework, based upon established criteria, within which decisions can be fashioned in an orderly manner. Individuals make the decisions and take the responsibility for them'. Sloan, A. (1963, p.514).

With continuous changes in political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal arenas, change has become constant in organisations, and the effective management of change has become vital for organisations to survive. Welch (2001) argues that if the rate of change inside an organisation is slower than the rate of change on the outside, then the end is near. The only question is when. In a business context and with the rapid pace changes, reacting to change sometimes might be late. It is argued that organisations need to be proactive rather than reactive by anticipating the changes in the market and the need in the industry. Actually, for many, they went few steps ahead and created a need that was not there in the first place. Drucker (2003, p.232) argues, 'to survive and succeed, every organisation will have to turn itself into a change agent. The most effective way to manage change is to create it'. A recent example would be the creation of the need for smart phones in the market by Apple in 2007, leading to a large shift of end consumers from conventional mobile phones to smart phones.

This has led to many successful mobile companies at that time to eventually lose their huge market share mainly to Apple and Samsung. For managers, management of change is one of the continuous challenges that they continuously face and have to deal with in their jobs. In addition of being expected to make new business strategies that suit and cope up with the new changes, managers are also expected to manage the challenges related to people who react differently to those changes.

The management of change has been extensively covered by academics and industrialists who continuously contributed in this area. (e.g., Beech *et al*, 2001, Drucker, 2003, Kotter, 1996). Citing Van de Ven & Poole (1995), Fernandez & Rainey (2006) state that a count of one million articles relating to organisational change were reported back then in the literature on organisation theory. This has led, as with many other areas of management and organisational theory, to the existence of many different models and perspectives on the concept of change within organisations. It is, however, worth mentioning that although many of these perspectives have different lists of change programme driving forces, restraining forces and of what a change may involve, most of them, on the other hand, revolve around one orbit when it comes to planning and analysing a change programme.

2.2.1 Definition

In its general terms, change management is defined as 'any approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organisations methods intended to re-direct the use of resources, business process, budget allocations, or other modes of operation that significantly reshape a company or organisation. Organisational Change Management (OCM) considers the full organisation and what needs to change. Organisational Change Management principles and practices include CM as a tool for change focused solely on the individual'. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Change_management accessed on 09.04.2016.

Beech *et al* (2001, p. 192) define a change programme as 'a plan for introducing new behaviours into a social system within a specified period of time. It is a systematic effort to change behaviours, roles and/or practices'.

2.2.2 Planning, analysing and managing change

The literature around organisational change often focuses on how to manage it effectively through a generalised step-by-step process. There are a number of models, of which some of the most used ones include: Lewin's change management model, Burke-Litwin's model of change, McKinsey's 7S model, and Kotter's 8 steps change model. In his model, Kotter (1996) introduced eight steps for leading change: creating urgency around the need for change, forming a powerful coalition convincing the people that change is necessary, creating a

vision for change, communicating the vision to get a buy in, removing obstacles that will lead to empowering broad-based action, creating short-term wins, staying persistent and building on the change, and anchoring the changes in corporate cultures. As with other change models, Kotter's model received its share of criticism, including that it is essentially a top down model and is mechanistic. Citing Pettigrew (1987), Beech *et al* (2001) broaden the debate, arguing that to plan or analyse a change programme, three things should be thought of: the context within which change occurs (this covers both inner and outer contexts), the content of change, and the process of change. In other words: *why* change? *what* needs changing? And *how* will change be managed? While the aforesaid three questions are considered vital in planning or analysing change, the question of *how* comes out as the most complex question among the three. This is mainly because while the first two questions depend heavily on decision making, resources, and the strategy of the organisation, the *how* questions is about implementing the change taking into considerations many challenges. Those challenges are related to power struggle, cultural aspects, the language and communication used, and of course the different reactions to change which varies from being denial to change all the way to embracing it. Having said so, the first two questions are not less important. Hiatt & Creasey (2003, p.14) argue that 'Understanding the *why* makes you better at doing the *how*. Change management is not a matter of simply following steps. Since no two changes are exactly alike, following a recipe for change management is not enough. The right approach is specific to the situation. If you do not understand the *why*, changes can fail even when standard processes are followed'.

2.2.3 Using dramaturgy in change management

The literature review shows that the topic of using dramaturgy in change management has been covered by many researchers and authors. (e.g., Badham *et al*, 2015, Boje *et al*, 2012, McCormick, 2007). For instance, McCormick (2007) offered a dramaturgical analysis of organisational change and conflict in a case study of a failed organisational change effort focused on a racial and gender harassment and intimidation in a federal organisation. To collect data for the case study, McCormick conducted semi structured interviews, participated in observation meetings, and reviewed relevant documents. The case study concluded that organisations, too, have front stage and backstage performances and an audience, and in situations of organisational change, dramaturgical analysis directs our attention to the struggle to understand what the situation is. It explains resistance to organisational learning, which often calls for giving everyone involved access to the backstage. It explains why management becomes so disturbed by scenes, and it explains why apparently small things like the title of a report become so organisational battlegrounds. It argues that in the organisational front stage, management attempts to present an ideal scenario using expressive control. The case also conclude that dramaturgical analysis can be expanded to analyse and understand organisational dynamics such as planned change and conflict. Badham *et al* (2015) introduce a dramatic rhetorical framework combining dramaturgical and pragmatic approaches to organisations and change.

They argue that the nature, delivery, and reception of the 5M framework provides a working model of a non-traditional approach for educating managers in managing change. The 5M model of mindful, mobilising, maps, masks, and mirrors has been applied to study change agency, change roles, planning change, leading change and learning change using dramaturgy. Badham *et al* (2015, p.26) argue that 'acting mindfully about change requires sensitivity to gaps between intention and outcome, to take into account the barriers to change and also to admit its complex character'. They also argue that mapping change journey will not lead to change unless the managers (performers) successfully perform change in practice. This means influencing the staff in relevant situational events.

2.3 Using metaphors and storytelling in dramaturgy to manage change in organisations

2.3.1 Definition of metaphor

The word 'Metaphor' originated from a Greek word *metaphorá*, which means to transfer. In the literature review, the definition of a metaphor has been captured and explained by many dictionaries, works, and papers. Citing Aristotle, Cunliffe (2002, p.137) defines metaphor as 'the perception of similarity in dissimilarity, the creation of relationships or links through the interplay of equivalence and contradiction'. Most of the definitions of metaphor revolve around the orbit of being a figure of speech, where a word or a phrase is used to refer to another thing in

order to suggest a resemblance (Cleary & Packard 1992). Cornelissen, *et al* (2005, p.1549) define metaphor as 'a linguistic utterance in which the combination of words is literally deviant in the sense that terms that have originally or conventionally been employed in relation to a different concept or domain are applied and connected to a target term or concept within organisation theory'. Morgan (2006, p. 4) argues that 'the use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervade how we understand our world generally'. These definitions focus on metaphors as linguistic and conceptual devices that emphasise similarity through difference and can transform them "into a respectable approach for organisational analysis" (Wood, 2001, p. 11). As such, they are not just concepts, they impact action: 'in a poetic sense, metaphors are not conceptual frameworks for viewing the world but implicit modes of speaking/writing that discursively shape meaning and experience in often tacit ways' (Cunliffe, 2002, p.137). Morgan (2006, p. 4) also argues that 'we use metaphor whenever we attempt to understand one element of experience in terms of another. Thus, metaphor proceeds through implicit or explicit assertions that A is (or is like) B'. Citing Richards (1936) who discussed the same argument earlier, Monin & Monin (1997) describe a metaphor as having two parts. The first part is the tenor, which is the subject to which attributes are ascribed. The second part is the vehicle, which is the object who attributes are borrowed. In the same context, and citing the work of Tsoukas (1991), Amernic *et al* (2007, p.1842) argue that 'metaphors involve the transfer of information from a relatively familiar domain, variously referred to as a source or base domain to a new and relatively unknown domain, usually referred to as a target domain'.

Cornelissen, *et al* (2005) argue that there are two models of metaphor, namely; Comparison model and Domains-interaction model. In the former model the metaphor works by likening the source to the target concept, while in the latter model the metaphor creates an emergent meaning structure that cannot be reduced or explained by referring to its constituent parts (i.e. the target and source concepts). Citing the work of Tsoukas (1991, 1993), Cornelissen, *et al* (2005, pp. 1547-1548) argue that 'a metaphor, as a figurative play of words, can be used in a creative manner to reveal literal structural similarities between concepts that were not salient before, and may as such provide for 'enriching' and 'insightful' new understandings of organisations'.

Finally, citing Beck (1987), Wood (2001) argues that metaphoric reasoning is a key human skill that functions like a series of bridges which lead to the construction of high-order mental links between entities. These studies illustrate that metaphors have an important impact in everyday and work life.

2.3.2 Historical Background

Across history, metaphors have been part of language, whether in a poem, speech, used as training tools or as religious verses, thus proving themselves to be a powerful aspect of language. It is difficult to say when metaphors were first used. However, going back in time, they can be traced and found as symbols in ancient cave paintings of the Stone Age, and later in the middle ages as poetry

and literature in the works of Plato and Aristotle. The theatrical plays of Shakespeare are famous for using metaphors extensively. In the modern era, metaphors continued to be used in different works (e.g., Dali's paintings) and different means (e.g., communications). In the 19th Century newspapers and magazines started using cartoon paintings as metaphors to describe political situations, for example political speeches such as Lincoln in 1863 and Martin Luther King in 1963. However, metaphors were not heavily explored in understanding organisations until the second half of the 20th century, when in the early 1980s, Gareth Morgan looked at organisations using the metaphors of organisations as: Machines, Organisms, Brains, Cultures, Political Systems, Psychic Prisons, Flux and Transformation, and Instruments of Domination. He (2006, p.3) argues 'that all theories of organisation and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that lead us to see, understand, and manage organisations in distinctive yet partial ways'. As such, they have a formative influence on our understanding. Cleary & Packard (1992, p. 230) argue that 'on an organisational level, thinking and speaking metaphorically is a completely natural phenomenon and occurs in the casual comments of employees' conversation. Perceptive organisation development consultants notice the rich metaphorical language of clients as they describe their work environment. This imagery leaves an impression that provides a sense of the organisation'. The criticisms that followed argued that using metaphors does not serve the understanding of organisational dynamics and can result in unclear explanations of organisational behaviour (Callahan, 2011).

Most of the challenges raised against using metaphors in organisations revolve around their limitations of giving the same understating to every recipient, that metaphors mean different things to different people (Hamilton, 2000, Wood, 2005; Amernic *et al.* 2007).

2.3.3 The symbolic metaphor

Stakeholders look at organisations differently. Each uses a different metaphor/s based on the way he or she perceives it and based on the information he or she has, which feed that perception/s. That view will influence stakeholder's views towards the people using metaphors in the organisation. Similarly, it is the information they know about the people in the organisation (staff members and management) that will shape the stakeholders metaphorical image of that organisation. Morgan (2006) argues that which metaphor we choose to use when trying to understand organisations will influence how we approach them.

In their paper examining how metaphors are developed and selected by organisational researchers, Cornelissen *et al* (2005) listed the root categories for both the 'organisational' and 'organisation' metaphorical word combinations, giving examples of conceptual metaphors upon which, they are each formulated and understood. They listed twenty-seven root metaphorical categories of 'organisational' conceptual metaphors and ten root metaphorical categories of 'organisation' conceptual metaphors.

Symbolic metaphor is one of the metaphorical categories that has been identified by many authors. In most, the symbolic metaphor is associated with drama, myths, and storytelling. Cornelissen *et al* (2005) argue that when it comes to symbolism as a root metaphorical category, the examples of the conceptual metaphors of the organisation are brand, symbols, myths, dramas, and storytelling. Bolman & Deal (1997) draw on symbolic metaphors in their four-frame model of organisations: the structural frame where the metaphor is a factory or a machine, the Human Resource frame where the metaphor is a family, the Political frame where the metaphor is a Jungle, and the Symbolic frame, where the metaphor is a carnival, a temple, or a theatre. They define the symbolic lens as:

‘The symbolic lens, drawing on social and cultural anthropology, treat organisations as temples, tribes, theatres, or carnivals. It abandons assumptions of rationality prominent in other frames and depicts organisations as cultures, propelled by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths, rather than rules, policies, and managerial authority’ (1997, p. 16).

2.3.4. Using metaphors in change management

‘Metaphors used by leaders are not linguistic decoration or verbal artistry: instead, metaphors are indicative of leaders thinking and form a basis of their actions’ Amernic *et al* (2007, p.1841) citing Oberlechner & Mayer-Schoenberger.

Palmer & Dunford (1996) identify where metaphors have been used to analyse and understand organisational practices including decision-making, leadership, organisation development, human resource development, policy, strategy, organisational design, and others. My review of the literature found a number of papers using metaphors to analyse change management processes in organisations (e.g., Akin & Palmer, 2000, Armenakis & Bedeian, 1992, Cleary & Packard, 1992, Küpers, 2013, Oswick & Montgomery, 1999, Palmer & Dunford, 1996, Sementelli & Abel, 2007) Those works can be clustered into three different categories: theoretical research, applied research, and managerial practice.

While there are a number of works and papers found in the literature about Shell, most of those papers relate to sustainable development, social responsibility, and learning. However, De Gues (1997) offers many insights of change and using metaphors in Shell. With regards to SOMC, there is no literature found on using metaphors in managing change. In fact, there are no records that metaphor was used by design in any previous change management programmes in SOMC.

2.3.5 Using symbolic metaphors in managing changes- Applied research

Palmer & Dunford (1996) examined different ways in which metaphors have been applied to organisational change. They argue that there are conflicting uses of metaphors within organisation theory, and they also argue that organisational analysts can adopt a reflexive approach to understand the implications of the

assumptions they make in using metaphors within the field of organisational change. The same argument has been covered and built on by different researches and works, for instance, Aramenakis & Bedeian (1992) and Küpers (2013).

Oztel & Hinz (2001) worked on a consultancy project to use metaphors to reduce accident rates in four Danish sugar factories. Their paper suggests that the use of metaphors can be clustered in three main elements. The first one reflects a conscious analytical process, yet not necessarily a rational one. The second one is associated with the emotional dimension, while the third element is associated with the ability of metaphors in fuelling actions. They argue that when change is the issue, the use of metaphors such as images, stories, narratives, and fairy tales foster unconscious learning process and have a bigger impact in the change process compared to formal conceptual learning. Hence, they argue, metaphors should be used to a larger extent when change is the issue, putting less weight on formal conceptual learning. They also argue that as a result of implementing this project the four factories documented a steady decline in numbers and severity of accidents over time. The paper exhibits a number of interesting examples that were used in the learning process of the employees throughout the consultancy project. However, the study does not consider the impact of employee demographics on the level of understanding of the individuals and their acceptance to change.

2.3.6 Using symbolic metaphors in managing changes- Managerial practice

Cleary & Packard (1992) argue that although the use of myths, metaphors, rituals, and symbols is becoming common in organisational development, there has been little written on specific methods to use metaphors in organisational change. Metaphors are powerful tools, whether used explicitly or implicitly, for organisational change and development (Akin & Palmer, 2000) because 'through the imagery they elicit, metaphors provide vivid, memorable, and emotion-arousing representation of preconceived experience.' (Cleary & Packard, 1992, p.230). For example, Jack Welch, ex CEO of General Electric, is perceived to be a transformational leader because of his use of metaphors.

Amernic, *et al* (2007), examined his language in his annual letters sent to the company stockholders over his 20 years tenure. They portray him as a leader who, through his corpus, communicated his beliefs, ideas, and visions using five characters/metaphors: a pedagogue, a physician, an architect, a commander, and a saint. In their descriptions of the five metaphors, the authors use a number of examples that can be drawn from specific statements or action-oriented verbs that were used by Jack Welch in his 20 letters. Those examples were outlined by the authors to help justifying the clustering of a number of similar metaphors under one of the dominant five root metaphors. The veracity of their metaphors/characters can be questioned, for example, it can be argued that Jack was more of a (dictator) rather than a physician relating to his reputation of firing the bottom 10 per cent of performers in GE every year and the authors note that

“Welch was a physician who was also prepared to administer euthanasia” (Amernic *et al.*, 2007, p8) – a physician ready to cut off an affected part of the body rather than a physician who diagnose health and prescribe remedies.

The interpretation therefore varies, with the same example of the routine dismissal of the bottom performing 10 per cent of staff being used by the authors in their description of Jack the commander metaphor. In his last letter of the year 2000, Welch argues that routinely removing the bottom performing 10 per cent of staff was good management. He justifies that by arguing that not doing so is a form of management failure and a form of cruelty. While this example can be argued to fit the commander metaphor, it supports the argument in the above paragraph that it is not a best example to describe the physician metaphor. This is mainly due to the fact that each one of those two metaphors/ characters is recognised with different personalities that can be argued to be opposites in many ways.

2.3.7 Challenges and limitations of using metaphors

Despite its importance and arguably its effectiveness as a mean of communication and constructing understanding, metaphors have a number of challenges and limitations. Morgan (2006) argues that using metaphors may hide some aspects of the target concept because while using metaphors can create valuable insights about the organisation, they can also be incomplete, biased, and misleading. This can ultimately blind people from some main aspects of the target concept.

Hamilton (2000, p.112) argues that 'the emphasis in metaphor is on conveying insights rather on drawing exact parallels'. Hence, the use of metaphors does not imply complete congruence along the full range of attributes, which means that metaphors have the capacity to mislead. Callahan (2011) argues that Pender (1982) and Bourgeois (1983) claim that using metaphors does not serve the understanding of organisational dynamics and result in unclear explanations of organisational behaviour. Both Pender and Bourgeois promote the scientific literal approach to understanding organisations, where they feel that with its wide range of interpretation, metaphor will result in spurious explanations of organisational behaviour rather than clear ones. Wood (2005) raises the challenge of understanding metaphors. In their paper of examining Jack Welch 20 letters to GE stockholders, Amernic *et al* (2007) acknowledge the limitations, the main one being that metaphors have different meanings to recipients. Hence, the messages might be different than what they were supposed to mean and achieve when initially said or delivered. Recently some researches feel that to understand contemporary organisations we need to use modern metaphors that recipients can easily relate to. For instance, Wood (2005) argues that with the heavy influence of cinema, TV, and internet as an intervening part in the construction of reality, old metaphors like the theatre metaphor can be used as a point of departure for the development of cinema metaphor. He argues that the cinema metaphor might provide a better perspective in studying contemporary organisations in the age of spectacle. In comparing both metaphors from the perspective on organisation, Wood (2005, p.17), explains that the theatre

metaphor defines organisation as a locus whose boundaries are set by the performance of an activity, and that it seeks to segregate natural and artificial behaviours on its perspective on human behaviour. In his view the cinema metaphor defines organisation as an open system, embedded in the environment, and it considers naturalness and artificiality as texts of an indivisible whole on its perspective on human behaviour.

2.4 Dramaturgy in Shell Oman Marketing Company

There are no records that dramaturgy or dramaturgical analyses were used by design in any previous change management programmes in SOMC. However, in a recent case study carried out by myself relating to the impact of installing CCTV cameras on staff behaviours in SOMC, it was noticed that the change agents used dramaturgical approaches by default supported by tools like metaphors and storytelling as vehicles to emphasise on their messages to the staff during their engagements. The following paragraph extracted from the above case study and it captures some of the observations:

‘Drama and storytelling were observed in the same specific engagement. The HSSE manager started using storytelling and drama as tools to communicate and convince the female staff members of his message. In brief, the HSSE manager took advantage of the meeting hall (stage), his role as a lead (actor) in the

engagement and the attendance of female staff members (the audience) to increase their security concerns (the message). He used storytelling of previous security incidents as a vehicle to send his (message) to the (audience) in order to get their acceptance and buy in to implement the project. In the interview with the HSSE manager(He) neither thought that he was on a stage nor he thought that he was acting when he was addressing the female staff members, but rather he felt he was being natural. This statement was interesting and raised the question of: Are we actors by nature? However, storytelling and drama in SOMC can be subjects for research in future papers’.

2.5 Summary

Goffman’s theory of dramaturgy has been extensively covered in the literature. There are many works that either complement, contest and debate or build on it. The literature also contains work on applying dramaturgy in change management. Yet, there are no study of dramaturgy in change management in an Arab culture or in Shell. Additionally, while most of the conventional change management skills focus on Why?, What? and How to manage change effectively, they overlook the importance of backstage performances and the intricacies of communication on the success of change management. Neither do they analyse the relationship between the performers and the audience, and the relationship between what gets communicated in front stage and what gets

discussed and challenged in the backstage and how the frontstage and backstage performances can be employed for effective communication that can help in successful change management.

Hence, this work, aims to explore and understand the role of dramaturgy in change management in SOMC. While addressing the above, the research also addresses many secondary questions on the relationship and the boundaries between front stage and backstage in SOMC. It also explores the supporting tools that can help a manager or a change agent to successfully manage change using dramaturgy. Moreover, it addresses the concerns and challenges associated with the approach.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will explain and justify my philosophy, research design, and methodology.

3.1 The research philosophy

As a researcher and a practitioner, I do appreciate the availability of both foundational and anti-foundational philosophical approaches. If we take positivism and interpretivism approaches for instance as two main examples of the aforesaid philosophical approaches, there will be decisions in work and life that will be made relying on positivist approaches such as financial and production related decisions that are very much linked with natural and physical laws. While there are many social science studies that have adopted positivism, it is important to be aware of the challenges and the limitations of this approach in being able to capture and understand complex social experience and human behaviour. These challenges and limitations are covered in many works, (e.g., Gill & Johnson, 2002, Laing, 1967, Saunders *et al*, 2012), some heavily criticise positivism and argue that it is either already dead or about to die. For instance, Schrag (1992, p.5) argue that while 'in some academic circles positivism is a living faith, in others it is a dead creed whose remaining adherents are either naive science worshipers or political reactionaries, or both'. Similarly, Johnson & Duberley (2000, p.11) do argue that positivist position 'is thought by some to be dead, or at least abandoned'.

Saunders et al (2012) argue that the main criticisms of positivism are around the argument that the social science is far more complex to be understood and

explained by definite laws in the same way as physical sciences. Gill & Johnson (2002, p.41) expand this argument by illustrating that although positivism 'may be adequate for the subject-matter of the natural sciences, it is not adequate for the social sciences. This is because there are fundamental differences between the subject-matter of the social sciences (human beings) and the subject-matter of the natural sciences (animals and physical objects)'. Citing the work of Laing (1967), Gill & Johnson (2002) explain that persons are distinguished from things in the sense that persons experience the world, whereas things behave in the world. To summarise the criticisms of positivism, Schrag (1992) lists four grounds: (a) it reduces people to mechanistic systems, (b) it reduces complex human dynamics to simplistic patterns, (c) it employs instrumental reasoning that is alleged to preclude rational evaluation of the ends themselves, and (d) it considers the question of causation to be independent of the question of value.

It is argued that interpretivism can offer more detailed understanding to human behaviour and provide insights that will help in managing people. Limitations of interpretivism relate to challenges involved in generalising findings of a specific study especially if it is in a different culture and different circumstances. Other challenges to interpretivism relate to different understandings emerging from the data which may have different meanings to the researcher as well as to the human subject of the study (e.g., Lee, 1991). Saunders *et al* (2012), add that another challenge comes from the argument that by entering the world of the study subject, the researcher may adopt an empathetic stance and there is

a possibility of the researcher understanding of the world of the study subjects comes from their perspectives. The researcher may write the research from the subject's perspective or vice versa.

While I do appreciate the different philosophical stances, I do see myself as a person leaning more towards interpretivism, without of course undermining the importance of other philosophical approaches and their ability to back the theories of research. In addition, and due to its nature and the data gathering tools and analysis, interpretivism has offered and expected to continue offering so many insights about people behaviour and social science overall.

Based on the above, my research will use a case study as a qualitative approach. Morgan & Smircich (1980) offered a typology situating qualitative methods within broader philosophical assumptions in between two approaches to social science; subjectivist approaches and objectivist approaches. While this typology is still used to help qualitative researchers situate their work, I do agree with the argument that there is now no clear subject-object distinction (Cunliffe, 2011). Based on Cunliffe (2011), the subject/subjectivism and object/objectivism antonym has been eroded. She revises Morgan and Smircich's typology from a subject-object continuum to three knowledge problematics; intersubjectivism, subjectivism, and objectivism. My research will be taking a subjectivism approach where the people are reflexively embedded in their social world, influenced by and influencing discursive practices.

3.2 The Case Study Methodology

Many researchers look at case study methodology as a popular and widely used approach to get a detailed and intensive analysis of a research topic within its context. (e.g., Bryman & Bell, 2011, Creswell, 2013, Saunders *et al*, 2012). These works argue that case study research normally explores a topic or a phenomenon within a specific context or setting. For instance, Bryman & Bell (2011) give examples of the different situations where case studies can be used. They argue that a case can be, a single organisation (for instance, Born's (2004) study of managerialism in the BBC), a single location (for instance, Milkman's (1997) investigation of an automobile assembly plant), a person (for instance, Marshall's (1995) study of women managers), or; a single event (for instance, Vaughan's (1990) case study of NASA space shuttle *Challenger* disaster in 1986). There are also particular cases that can lead to many case studies due to their complexities, several areas of research, as well as being famous because of the impact they made. For instance, due to its nature, the tragedy involved, the reputational impact and the losses recorded, the case study of *Challenger* space shuttle disaster has led to many papers and books. These works used different lenses and researched the case from different angles. (e.g., Allen *et al*, 2016, McDonald & Hansen, 2012, Vaughan, 1990, Weick, 1997).

Since my study is context of change management in an organisation, I believe a case study methodology can be a good research strategy to help having a focused and an in depth understanding of the main topic being studied through

the lens of dramaturgy. In this research, a case study will give more focus, insights, and understanding of the impact and implications of applying dramaturgy in change management. The case study covered in my research is on installing CCTV cameras in the offices of SOMC. While phase 1 of this project was implemented around two and a half years ago to cover the main building, it is still currently being discussed and reviewed at different levels in the organisation. Also, SOMC is recently on the verge of installing phase 2 of the project by installing the CCTV cameras in its other two buildings; the lubricant supply chain and the trade & supply buildings. Moreover, all key stakeholders who were involved in the project two and a half years ago are still available to get the data from. As M8, one of the interviewees for this research explained that the lengthy and heated discussions that took place around this project as well as the background associated with it make the whole experience vivid and easy to reflect back to. Data will be collected from the staff members of SOMC at different levels of the organisation including both change agents and change recipients. The method will be qualitative and both semi-structured interviews and unstructured observations will be used to gather primary data. In addition, written documents such as speech transcripts and email correspondences will be used as documentary secondary data.

Creswell (2013, pp. 98-99) lists the following 7 defining characters that he argues are found in most of the qualitative case studies he reviewed:

I. Case study research begins with the identification of a specific case. The key is to define a case that can be bounded or described within certain parameters, such as a specific place and time.

II. The intent of conducting a case study is clarified. A qualitative case study can be composed to illustrate a unique case that has unusual interest in and of itself. Alternatively, it may be composed to understand a specific issue, a problem or a concern.

III. It presents an in-depth understanding of the case. In order to achieve that, the researcher collects many forms of qualitative data, ranging from interviews to observations, to documents, to audio-visual materials.

VI. The approach of data analysis in a case study will differ.

V. A complete findings section of a case study would involve both a description of the case and themes or issues that has been uncovered in studying the case.

VI. The themes or issues might be organised into a chronology, analysed across cases for similarities or differences among the cases, or presented as a theoretical model.

VII. Case studies often end with conclusions about the overall meaning derived from the case.

The above 7 characters were followed and adopted as a road map in this research to ensure focus, clarity and reference to earlier works.

3.3 Who is studied?

My research explored the role of dramaturgy in change management in SOMC. Data was gathered from the staff members of SOMC. I interviewed twenty-two staff members, observed engagements in change issues where all classes of businesses and the different levels of the organisation were involved. This included but was not limited to the managers, office-based staff, field-based staff, drivers and workers. SOMC has a total workforce of around 380 staff members including 275 direct hires by SOMC while the rest are contracted through a third-party company. The staff members come from 11 different countries, with Omanis form around 90% of total staff. Male to female ratio is 77:23. There are a number of works relate to doing research in your organisation. (e.g., Alvesson, 2003, Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, Morse, 1994). For instance, in their work '*In defence of being native: The case for insider academic research*', Brannick & Coghlan (2007) explore the subject of insider research. They question the what they referred to as 'established tradition' that academic theory-driven research in organisations are conducted best by outsiders. This 'established tradition' is built on the argument that insider researchers have personal stake and emotional investments in the setting. Hence, not attaining the objectivity of the valid research. They assemble a number of points to support their argument that insider researchers not only offer valid and useful researches, but also provide important knowledge about what organisations. They argue that insider researchers do provide knowledge

on what organisations are really like, which traditional approaches may not be able to uncover. They also argue that insider research offers the researcher several advantages that may not be available for the outside researchers. For instance, the researcher's status in the organisation has an impact on access. They add that insider researchers derive benefits from their experience and pre-understanding of the organisation in terms of organisation's everyday life, the everyday jargon, and what occupies colleague minds. However, there also a number of challenges raised on insider researchers. For instance, Saunders *et al* (2012) argue that insider researchers may assume too much and so not probe in data gathering as much if they were outsiders or not aware of the situation. They may also think that they know the answer and hence, not expose their current thinking or use a difference lens. Moreover, insider researchers may have a strong desire to influence and change the organisation. They may feel empathy for their colleagues, which may compromise their judgement or understanding of the data.

3.4 Methods of data collection

Taking the research philosophy into account, the methods of collecting primary data included semi structured interviews and unstructured observations in form of participant as observer. Many researchers look at interviews as one of the main data collection tools and most widely employed method in qualitative research. (e.g., Bryman & Bell, 2011, Punch, 2005). For instance, Punch (2005)

argues that the interview is a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings of situations and constructions of reality. Participant observation is also regarded by many researchers as one the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research (e.g. Creswell, 2013, Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In-fact a number of works argue that one of the methodological strengths of participant observations is that it facilitates access to Goffman's (1956) uncensored backstage of organisations (e.g., Gill & Johnson, 2002, Punch, 2005). In addition to the above tools that aimed at collecting primary data, presentation slides and notes from speeches were used to gather documentary secondary data for the research. With regards to interviews, twenty-two staff members were interviewed in English. The sampling method that was used was purposive sampling with a variation sampling plan to cover the different demographics of the company staff in terms of gender, education level, seniority level and origins covering both locals and expatriates. The sample also included both change agents and change recipients. Informant sampling was followed for the unstructured observation focusing on engagements that discuss CCTV in different aspects, whether at management level meetings (backstage) or during staff engagement (front stage). Participant observation took place in both formal meetings and informal gatherings. The observations were overt. One of the challenges with overt observation was the possibility of creating reactivity from the participants. Hence, impacting the natural behavioural of the participants. Based on an earlier Exec MBA paper, that was made in the same organisation

regarding the impact of CCTV on staff behaviour, I discovered that one outcome was that installing CCTV would negatively impact staff interactions with each other as some staff will not be interacting naturally feeling that they are being watched. Moreover, and similarly important is that being observed by a senior member in the organisation is already a huge challenge to overcome for the observation exercise as it might add stress and create reactivity with staff members. This challenge might negatively impact other key performance indicators of the company's performance such as staff wellbeing as well as the staff related elements reflected in the company's annual people survey.

For transparency and ethics compliance reasons, a general email was sent out to all staff by the HR manager as a gate keeper prior to conducting the research, stating that a research will be taking place in the organisation that includes observation and mentioning the time frame of the observation. However, in order to reduce the possibility of reactivity, participants were not reminded at every single meeting that an observation will be taking place during the engagement. This approach is also coupled with the idea that the research does not aim to expose a taboo topic, where once revealed, it might have negative implications on the organisation and/or some staff members. This research is trying to find an answer to an issue that is expected to help the management, the staff members, and eventually the organisation in change management. With regards to secondary data, they were collected from corresponding documents

addressing the topic of installing CCTV cameras as well as speeches and presentation slides, which change agents used in their engagements with the change recipients.

3.4.1 Interviews

Saunders *et al* (2012) argue that interviews can help gather valid and reliable data that are relevant to the research question(s) and objectives. They add that interviews can also help in refining the ideas of the researcher in case the research questions were not yet formed. Punch (2005) describes the interview as one of the main data collection tools in the qualitative research, where people's perceptions and meanings can be assessed. He argues that interviews are one of the most powerful methods of understanding others.

3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

There are a number of definitions and explanations of the semi-structured interview. Most of those explanations revolve around the idea that a semi-structured interview normally starts with a few specific questions and then continues based on the probing made by the interviewer and the initial responses given by the interviewee (Cooper & Schindler 2008, Creswell 2013, Saunders *et al* 2012,). Accordingly, in semi-structured interviews the same ordering of the questions might not necessarily be followed. Moreover, some

questions can be dropped depending on the flow of the interview and the detailed the answers might be. Saunders *et al* (2012) argue that the semi-structured interview is the most appropriate method in situations where the questions to be answered are either open-ended or complex, and also where the order of the questions may need to be varied.

Punch (2005) lists a number of questions that need to be considered when identifying the respondent; Who? Why? When? Where? How many will be interviewed? How many times will they be interviewed? How long the interview is?, and how will access to the interview situation be organised?

For this research, twenty-two semi-structured individual interviews were conducted in English. The duration of the interviews ranged between thirty minutes to an hour. The main change agent of the case study was interviewed twice in two separate days. Each of the two interviews took a little over an hour. Generally, I always kept myself ready to extend the interviews beyond the agreed one hour in case the interviewees were willing to share more reflections and experiences, and the time naturally got extended. My plan was to keep my input to the minimum and to use active listening with a lot of encouraging body language like nodding and demonstrating keenness and interest in listening to them. The interviewees were given the choice to pick the interview location and the time they felt more comfortable with. The idea was to give the interviewees (the staff members) an additional layer of independence by giving them the choice to be away from any possible time and work pressure of being in the

office. Also, being the CEO of SOMC, avoiding any organisational authority or power imbalance that may impact the interviewees. Despite that offer, except for two interviews that took place outside the office over weekends, the remaining twenty interviewees preferred to have the interviews in the office during the working hours. To minimise any organisational authority pressure, the interviews took place in a room with a round table, and the seating arrangements were informal. Having the interviews in the office helped in avoiding any distraction that might happen in a public place due to external factors, which can interrupt the flow of the interviews in some cases. Before the interviews, a number of preparations were done to help making the atmosphere friendly and undisruptive. These preparations included reviewing and practicing the themes and the initial questions of the interviews, ensuring switching off my mobile phone and making sure that the place of the interview is as far as possible from any distraction by external factors. During the interview, a list of steps was followed. For instance, ensuring that I start by ice breaking questions that are not related to the research, but more to the interest of the interviewees that I have already gathered some information about, such as sports, films, travels, or general topics like the weather, the traffic, etc. These questions aimed at putting the interviewee at ease, as well as building a connection that might help him or her to share more insights. I also ensured that I thank the interviewees for their time, their acceptance to be part of the research and for the interview to be audio recorded as well as for sharing their experiences regarding the case

study. This was followed by emphasising on the anonymity of the respondents, reminding them of the objective of the research and how the data collected from the interview will help in the research. The next step was related to bringing the interviewee to the case study and his or her experience around that. This was followed by questions related to front stage and backstage performances in SOMC. The last step was to thank the interviewees again for their time and insights, and check whether they have any questions before the interview is ended. The style that was followed throughout the interview included, listening, establishing rapports, showing interest in what the interviewee share, using body language, and knowing when to probe without disturbing the flow.

3.4.3 The interview questions

Following a semi structured method; a few questions were derived from the main research question, with a readiness to deviate from the general questions when necessary and if it seemed appropriate. The order of the questions was not necessarily followed because the aim was to build a natural dialogue. The idea was to try to stay away from any feeling of interrogation or (mechanical) interest that the interviewee might get with in case the questions followed a prearranged order rather than following the sequence of the conversation. Also, the intention was to encourage the interviewees to freely speak their minds on the topic of the research, and at the same time, as an interviewer, demonstrate

a genuine interest in their responses. Hence, the questions were prepared in open ended style. Some of the questions were not planned but rather came naturally in the sequence of the interview as a probe, and/or at the time it was found appropriate. Below are the set of questions which have been divided in three categories; general questions that aimed at breaking the ice and making the interviewee comfortable; questions on the topic of dramaturgy and the case study of CCTV, which aimed at bringing the attention of the interviewees towards the topic, and specific questions of their personal experiences before, during, and after attending the engagements of both front stage and backstage performances regarding the installation of CCTV cameras.

A. Questions related to breaking the ice and ensuring the interviewee understandings of the interview process:

I. How are you doing?

II. Are you comfortable with the place and the seating (of the interview)?

III. Is the process clear to you based on my introduction and the information sheet?

VI. Do you have any questions before we start?

B. Questions aimed at bringing the interview attention and focus towards the case study:

I. How do you remember the discussions related to installing CCTV cameras in the office?

II. What were your views on installing the CCTV cameras in the office?

III. What were the views of your colleagues?

IV. How did you convey your views to your colleague?

V. How did you convey your views to the management?

C. The specific questions that the research is trying to address (related to front stage and backstage performances in SOMC:

I. As a staff / Change agent did you prepare before we went for the engagement?
If yes,

II. How did you do that?

III. Did you align with any colleague beforehand?

IV. What happened in the engagement?

V. What is seen as front stage performance in SOMC?

VI. What are backstage performances in SOMC?

VII. What makes a specific performance better than another?

VIII. What are the supporting tools that help a performer in his play/act/performance?

IX. How do change agents feel about the performance/act?

X. Are there resistances to performances from change agents?

XI. Are there clear boundaries between front stage and backstage? Or are they blurred?

XII. What are the consequences when there are no clear boundaries between front stage and backstage?

XIII. Do boundaries need to be managed in some way?

XIV. What is the impact of these performances in the organisation? Do they cause conflict or distress?

XV. Is it helpful to give multiple actors access to backstage performances?

3.4.4 Description of the interviewees character:

The interviewees are 'the characters' of the research. Each of the interviewees is described below in terms of age, gender, background, education level and personality. They are referred to with a letter (F) for female, or a letter (M) for male followed by a number. The table below summarises the personalities of the interviewees followed by a more detailed description of each which helps explain why people responded the way they did.

Ref	Role	Gender	Age	Origin	Main descriptions of the characters
M1	Change Agent	Male	Early 40s	Omani	Strict, goes by the book, perceived as fair and genuine, and calm in his communications
M2	Change Agent	Male	Early 40s	Omani	Listens and pays attention to people and demonstrates maturity in his dealings
M3	Change recipient	Male	Early 50s	Omani	Extrovert with high sense of humour. Speaks up his mind but sometimes not careful with his words
M4	Change recipient	Male	Early 50s	Omani	Vocal with high sense of humour, loud, speaks up his mind and hates protocols
M5	Change recipient	Male	Late 50s	Asian	Sarcastic, tough in his dealings and practical in his decision making
M6	Change recipient	Male	Early 30s	Omani	Approachable who enjoys gossips and conversations with people
M7	Change recipient	Male	Late 30s	Omani	Conservative and careful with spending. Well articulate yet easily distracted
M8	Change recipient	Male	Early 40s	Omani	Caring and vocal

M9	Change recipient	Male	Early 40s	Omani	Extrovert and very friendly. Conservative in his dealings
M 10	Change recipient	Male	Mid 50s	Asian	Well respected, avoid taking sides in discussions, and normally does not speak up his mind
M 11	Change recipient	Male	Mid 40s	Omani	An introvert, self-motivating and soft spoken
M 12	Change recipient	Male	Mid 40s	Asian	Extrovert, high sense of humour and loudly jokes
F1	Change recipient	Female	Early 30s	Omani	Introvert, quiet, calm and always friendly
F2	Change recipient	Female	Late 30s	Omani	Extrovert and vocal with a sense of humour
F3	Change recipient	Female	Mid 30s	Omani	Very approachable, open minded with progressive thinking
F4	Change recipient	Female	Mid 30s	Omani	Well dressed, down to earth and very approachable
F5	Change recipient	Female	Early 30s	African	Introvert with high sense of humour and good relationship with her colleagues

F6	Change recipient	Female	Mid 30s	Omani	Comes across as very serious. She tries to keep boundaries with her colleagues
F7	Change recipient	Female	Early 40s	Middle Eastern	Outspoken, cares for prestige and looks.
F8	Change recipient	Female	Late 20s	Omani	Extrovert, enjoys throwing jokes and has interests in other people
F9	Change recipient	Female	Early 40s	Omani	Introvert who works better solo
F10	Change recipient	Female	Late 30s	Omani	Quiet and kind in her dealings with colleagues and customers

3.4.5 The ‘characters’: The change agents

I. The first interviewee was the main change agent who has been driving the project of installing CCTV cameras in the office. He is an Omani male, in his early 40s, who did his graduate studies in the UK. He can be described as an introvert and cautious, known in the organisation as a strict person who (goes by the book). He is perceived by many as a fair and a genuine person. His way of communication is generally very calm, yet very clear. He is referred to in this research as M1. He has been interviewed twice for this research in two separate days. Each of his interviews went on for almost an hour.

II. The second change agent who was interviewed is referred to as M2. He is a senior member in the management team. He is married and in his early 40s. He had worked in a number of different industries before joining SOMC. He has got his graduate degree from the UK and his post graduate degree from the US. He is the type of a person who listens carefully and he demonstrates maturity in his dealings and approach.

3.4.6 The ‘characters’: The change recipients

I. M3 is a senior member of the management of SOMC, who has not been in favour of installing CCTV inside the office. He is an Omani male, in his early 50s, did his graduate studies in the US. He is known in the organisation for speaking his mind, yet sometimes without being careful with his words. He is also known for his sense of humour and for making sure that he adds fun element in his internal business meetings and engagements. M3 was not in favour of installing the CCTV cameras inside the corridors. He feels that putting the cameras at entrances and exits are sufficient for security purposes. He also feels that putting the cameras in the corridors is an invasion of staff privacy, and raised a question, *‘Where do we draw a line’?*

II. M4 is a mid-management staff member in the organisation. He has worked in the telecommunications sector before joining SOMC. He is in his early fifties. He completed his Bachelor’s degree in the US. In the organisation he is vocal, loud and always speaks up his mind regardless of who is in the room.

He hates protocols to the point that sometimes he can be seen as unorganised. His high sense of humour became part of his identity. M4 has always been against the idea of installing CCTV cameras in the office. When the installations of the cameras happened, he actually encouraged female colleagues to speak up against the project.

III. A similar view to M4's on the project of installing CCTV cameras came from M5 who believes that the installation was a done deal and the engagement (the performance) was a one-way communication. *"Also, the engagement was completely missing. It was a, am the boss, I'm going to do it."* M5. Describing the project, M5 used phrases like, the installation "was kind of rammed down our throat". He also feels that the process wasn't democratic. M5 is in his late 50s. He is an expatriate and has extensive experience and background in his business function. He is sarcastic with deadpan delivery of jokes or comedic lines. Although he comes across to a lot of people as tough, in reality he is a practical manager who keeps his emotions aside to get the job done. He is a family man who is proud of his love to his wife and two children.

IV. A complete opposite view to the ones from M4 and M5 came from M6 who feels installing CCTV is a company decision. He feels that SOMC should have implemented this directly without debating it with the staff members. He also mentioned that he was personally indifferent about the CCTV cameras, yet he attended the engagement. M6 explains; *"To me, at the time, I was ... I am, by nature, a curious person. I went to see what's going to happen and hoping for some entertainment. We got it, a little bit"*.

He left the engagement while it was going on because he felt they were discussing something that should not be debatable, and it was taking so much time and energy. M6 is an Omani male. He is single and in his early 30s. He lived abroad for a few years where he got his Bachelor's degree. He is very smart and fast in delivery. His high sense of humour makes him approachable and fun to be with, and he is a good listener and communicator. His simplicity in interactions made him go through some hard learning lessons especially from unpredictable staff colleagues. He shows interests in having conversations with people in different topics.

V. M7 is a management team member who completed his bachelor degree in Oman. He is in his late 30s. Despite coming originally from a rural area with a conservative cultural background, he is known for his socially liberal point of views. Similarly, his sense of humour shows his social liberalism. On the other hand, fiscally he is known for being conservative and careful with spending. He is articulate, listens to people when they talk but is also easily distracted. M7 was in favour of installing the CCTV cameras around the office. From his point of view there are many advantages to that to both the company and the staff members. His view of the engagement is that M1 should have been more aggressive rather than being too accommodating especially that the matter that was being discussed is related to security.

VI. M8 is in his early 40s with a post graduate degree from the UK. He assumed a couple of senior roles in SOMC. Recently he has been struggling on the professional career development aspect, but still maintains his willingness to support the team which he is part of. He recently put his focus in developing his own business while he is still working for SOMC. He comes across as caring manager for his team. He has passion for new gadgets. M8 was very vocal in his views opposing the installation for CCTV cameras. In his views CCTV compromises staff personal privacy. He went on debating this project in management team meetings to the point that the management decided to vote internally on the project. In his view, despite he was always against the project, but once the majority of the management team members voted for the project, he accordingly showed support to the project in all the subsequent front stage performances (meetings) that involved all staff members or even in one to one engagements with other staff members.

VII. M9 is an Omani male who is in his early 40s. He got his Bachelor's degree from Oman and currently doing his post graduate studies. He can be described as an extrovert person who has dealt a lot with people due to his previous roles dealing with internal and external stakeholders. He is very friendly, yet he maintains his socially conservative personality most of the time. He is well respected in the organisation at different levels. M9 has always been indifferent about the installation of the CCTV cameras. He continuously seeks spiritual advices for his life and career choices. He believes that the organisation has wasted a lot of time debating this among the staff and the management.

VIII. M10 is an expatriate male who is in his mid-50s. He has been working for the organisation for long period and is well-respected for the experience in his skill pool. He avoids getting into conflicts in discussions and ensures that he doesn't take sides when a business-related argument take place. He normally does not speak his mind without being prompted, which can limit the sharing of knowledge with his colleagues. He seems more introvert than extrovert but can easily fit in any group.

IX. M11 is an Omani male who is in his mid-40s. He is part of the management team. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Oman. In recent years, he has been one of the most rising stars of the company. He is a very good example of a self-motivating person who worked very hard to reach where he is today. Generally speaking, he is soft-spoken and might come across to people as an introvert. However, in reality he works better with teams and enjoys team activities like playing football.

X. M12 is an Asian male who graduated from the States. He is new to the team. Yet, it did not take him time to adjust in the new culture and, make friends and become popular as a social person. Within the relatively short period of time working for SOMC he has built a reputation of being a hard worker, a tough negotiator, as well as someone who delivers his targets. He is in his mid-40s. He is an extrovert with a big sense of humour. He continuously and loudly jokes around with his colleagues.

XI. F1 is an Omani female. She is a junior level staff member, in her early 30s. She did her graduate studies in the UK. Despite being smart, her energy level is not pushed and she seems to be happy being in her comfort zone. F1 is an introvert and can be described as a quiet and a calm person, yet always friendly with a constant smile and welcoming face.

XII. F2 is an Omani female. She is a junior staff member. She is in her late 30s. She is an extrovert, vocal and uses her sense of humour in her dealings with her colleagues and customers. She has been working for the company for more than 13 years.

XIII. F3 is in her mid-30s. She is very approachable, open-minded person with progressive thinking. Before her marriage, one wouldn't be surprised to see her sitting in office late at nights, but she is still an extrovert person who is known for her hard work and dedication.

XIV. F4 is Mid-management woman who finished her Bachelor's degree from Oman. Due to her father's job who worked outside Oman for many years, she lived abroad for several years when she was a child and a teenager before returning back to Oman with her parents. She is in her mid-30s. She is well dressed and is known for being down to earth and very approachable.

XV. F5 is a female expatriate who has been working for the organisation for over 4 years now. She is in her early 30s. She is an introvert. She has good sense of humour and maintains very good relationship with her colleagues. She always ensures that she takes part of staff team building activities. and projects.

XVI. F6 is in her mid-30s. She is part of the middle management in the organisation. She completed her studies in Oman. She comes across like an overly serious person, but once you get to know her, she starts to show her extrovert side. She is generally regarded as one of the future leaders and is well-trusted in the Company. Generally speaking, female staff look up to her as a role model and an inspiration from a professional point of view. She tries to keep boundaries with her colleagues in order to maintain professionalism. In the recent months, she has been suffering from some medical issues, but she accepted the reality and demonstrated her commitment to deliver despite these challenges.

XVII. F7 is an expat female. She is a Middle Eastern who is in her early 40s. She is very outspoken and ensures that she makes her thoughts heard in any setting. Many feel that she talks more than she listens. She comes across like a hard worker, and she is clearly aspiring to reach to more senior roles within the organisation. She cares for prestige and looks and believes in their impact on perception and business.

XVIII. F8 is a female employee in her late 20s. She completed her Bachelor's degree from Oman and has been working for SOMC ever since. She has an extrovert personality and likes working with groups. She enjoys throwing jokes and uses herself as an example to make fun of. She has interests in knowing other people. On the other hand, she can be unpredictable sometimes and will take things too sensitively.

XIX. F9 is a local female staff member, who is in her early 40s. She is an introvert and works better solo. She completed her bachelor and Master's degree while working for the organisation, and she attributes that achievement to the Company as it enabled her and funded her studies as an employee.

XX. F10 is a female staff in her late 30s. She comes from a marketing and events management background, but her personality is quieter than one would expect. Despite being stuck in her current role for long without career progression, she seems to be still motivated to prove herself whenever she handles a task especially when presenting to a higher management team member. She is kind in person and has never had an argument, to my knowledge, with anyone.

3.4.7 Strengths and Weaknesses of the interviews

Interviews can be argued as one of the effective ways to capture data and human experiences and feelings. They offer a number of advantages to researchers. Cooper & Schindler (2008) argue that one of these advantages is being able to capture both non-verbal and verbal behaviour of the interviewees when interviews are conducted face-to-face. Saunders *et al* (2012) argue that another advantage is that interviews can provide the researcher with an opportunity to probe answers, and if properly managed can offer a rich and detailed set of data. However, interviews can have a number of challenges. Saunders *et al* (2012) list four data quality issues associated with semi-structured interviews, namely; reliability, interviewer and interviewee bias, generalisability, and validity. They argue that the

lack of standardisation of these types of interviews may lead to concerns about reliability. The concern about reliability in these types of interviews is also related to bias. This type of bias maybe caused by a perception about the interviewer due to his body language, tone, or even questions. Similarly, the bias may be caused by the interviewee who chooses not to reveal or discuss a specific aspect or a theme. While the generalisability refers to the extent to which the findings of the research are applicable to other settings, the validity refers to the extent to which the researcher has gained access to the participant's knowledge and experience. Bryman & Bell (2011) argue that the process of the interviewing, the transcripts, and the analysis of the transcripts is very time consuming. Sekaran and Bougie (2010) argue that tape recording of interviews might lead to biased responses even if the respondents do not object being recorded. They argue that tape recording of interviews might give the respondents the feeling that their anonymity is not fully preserved. Referring to the work of Spencer (1980), Gill & Johnson (2002) have a different experience. They argue that tape recording in that research was effective and caused little concern that after a few minutes the respondents became unaware of the recorder. Cooper & Schindler (2008) highlight the need to have a trained or skilled interviewer to be able to make the interviewees comfortable, probe for details, listen carefully and extract insights from the detailed dialogue. Bryman & Bell (2011) consider interviews to be more time consuming compared to other data collection methods.

3.4.8 Ethnographic techniques (Observation)

Saunders *et al* (2012) argue that if a research question(s) and objectives are concerned with what people do, an obvious way in which to discover this is to watch them do it. Punch (2005) argues that when we need to understand the cultural context of a behaviour, and symbolic meaning of a behaviour within a context, the ethnographic approach is a useful method of discovery in dealing with something new, different or unknown. He argues that it is an excellent way of gaining insights especially in complex behavioural setting and those involving other cultures and subcultures. Citing the work of Hammersley & Atkinson (1995), Punch (2005) defines ethnography as where the ethnographer (researcher) participates in people's daily lives for a period of time observing their behaviour asking questions and collecting other relevant data. The participation of the researcher in the observation can be overt, where the researcher identity is revealed, or can be covert where the researcher conceals his identity. Gill & Johnson (2002, p.149), develop taxonomy of field roles of four possible types of observational research as demonstrated in figure 1 below. The four types of observational research are;

- i. Complete participant, where the researcher attempts to become a member of the group he is researching without revealing his true purpose to the group members;
- ii. Complete observer, where the researcher does not take part of the activities, yet he does not reveal the purpose of the activity to those he is observing;

iii. Observer as participant, where the researcher's main purpose, which is to observe the participants is revealed to the group of participants, yet the researcher does not interact with the participants or the events; and.

iv. Participant as observer, where the researcher's identity and purpose are revealed to the participants of the research and the researcher interacts with the participants and take part in the events.

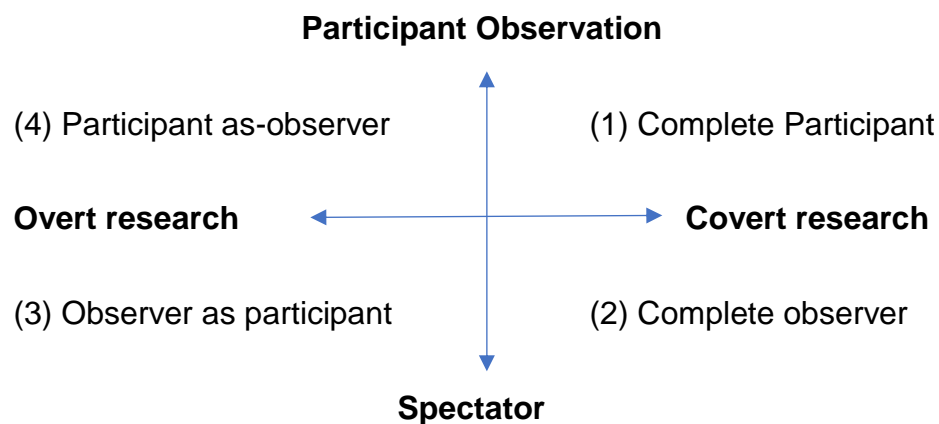


Figure 1; the four types of observational research as developed by Gill & Johnson (2002)

Saunders *et al* (2012) list 6 factors that will determine the choice of the field role of the observational research. Referring to them, the role of participant as observer was felt to be more appropriate for this research. These factors are listed below:

(1) The purpose of the research, guided by the appropriateness of the method for the research question(s) and objectives. For instance, discovering what it is like to be a member of a specific group or a participant in a specific event is more appropriate to the participant as observer role.

(2) The status of the researcher and the way he or she capitalise on the opportunities offered, and address the challenges created by that status to collect data. For instance, as a part time student, the researcher will encounter a number of advantages as well as some issues created by her status in her employing organisation where she is conducting the research. However, if the researcher was a full-time student, then there will challenges in securing access before adopting the approach.

(3) The time the researcher has to devote to their research, as some of the roles within the four types of observational research as well as deep understanding of some organisational phenomenon are very time consuming.

(4) The degree to which the researcher feels suited towards a specific field role of the observational research. This has to deal with the personality of the researcher as well as how he can deal with the ethical challenges associated with each role.

(5) Organisational access, which has different levels and varies depending on a number of elements like the topic and the nature of data gathered.

(6) Ethical considerations and the degree the researcher reveals his identity or purpose will be dictated by his ethical considerations.

3.4.9 Participant as observer

The second method of data collection in this research has been through carrying out an unstructured observation, where the observation field is the main office of SOMC and precisely where management meetings and staff engagements take place. The observation method followed in this research is a participant as observer, which falls in quadrant number 4 in the above figure. In this quadrant the researcher takes part in the observation exercise and reveals his identity and purpose as a researcher. Saunders *et al* (2012, p.345) explains: 'In the role of participant-as-observer you would both take part and reveal your purpose as a researcher. This role is potentially a broad one. On the other hand, you may become a fully accredited participant by becoming, for example, an employee in order to undertake your observation study in a particular context.'

There were no observation forms used in the observation exercise of this research. The approach was a general, unstructured, exploratory one where the style was open to observe what will emerge from the communications between the people involved in the meetings and find facts with no expectations of what might be discovered. The observation in particular was focusing on the communication style followed by the main performers and the reactions from the staff members. This includes the body language reflected by the audience to reflect an acceptance or challenges to the performer. Also, the way that reaction has driven the performer to either continue or change his style of performance.

3.4.10 Strengths and Weaknesses of observations

One of the biggest strengths of observation is that it captures people's natural behavioural. Cooper & Schindler (2008) argue that observation is the only available method to collect certain type of data. They also add that another advantage of observation is that the data is collected at the time they occur. However, observation is also a slow and expensive method for collecting data. Other main challenges relate to the ethical elements of observation, as it gives power to the researcher over those studied in the sense that the researcher will be able to discover their personal and private details. Moreover, many works raise the concern that the close observation to the subject study may lead into bias and the researcher may get emotionally compromised in his data gathering and data analysis. (e.g., Bryman & Bell, 2011, Punch, 2005, Saunders *et al*, 2012). For instance, Bryman & Bell (2011) refer to this situation as 'going native'. They argue that it is a situation that affect ethnographers when they lose their sense of being a researcher and become wrapped up in the world view of the people they are studying. They argue that 'going native' is a potential problem for several reasons but mainly due to the reason that the ethnographer can lose sight of his or her positions as a researcher, and therefore find it difficult to develop a business angle on the collection and analysis of data. Citing the work of Beynon (1975), Bryman & Bell (2011) give an example where Beynon was criticised by reviewers for 'going native' following publications of his book *Working for Ford*. It was suggested that he became a spokesperson of the Ford factory workers, and his emotional involvement was seen as having gone too far. Cooper & Schindler (2008) and Gill & Johnson (2002) discuss the ethical issues arising from the relationship between

the researcher and the host organisation and also between the researcher and the subject of the study.

3.5 Methods of analysing the data

An inductive approach was followed to analyse the data gathered in the research. The approach aimed at exploring the data after they were collected to see which themes or issues to identify and concentrate on. Due to the large amounts of textual data that are gathered, thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The audio recordings of the 22 interviews were transcribed. Open coding was used to analyse the data. Short statements relevant to the research questions were identified from the transcripts, and then built into themes for discussion. After which those themes were relooked again in relation to the literature to understand whether these themes were identified and discussed in earlier works or they are unique to this research. Observation notes were taken on the spot in shorthand. The notes were later recorded in actual statements capturing what exactly was observed in terms of behaviour, comments made, and any gesture or body language noticed. Similarly, the findings from the observation exercise were clustered under the different themes of the research and then were compared with earlier works from the literature. The documents such as emails, transcript of speeches, and presentation slides were summarised. The summary described the purpose of the document and how it relates to the topic. Similarly, and just like the primary data, the documentary secondary data were categorised, summarised and then discussed.

CHAPTER 4: ETHICAL ISSUES

While I obtained ethical approval from the University's Ethics Committee to complete my research, a number of ethical issues appeared throughout the research that had to be looked at and considered. These relate particularly to my position as CEO in the organisation and my methodology. I address these ethical issues below.

4.1 Ethical issues prior to conducting the research

One of the first ethical issues that had to be addressed prior to conducting the research was access. Since this research relates to people working in one organisation (staff members of SOMC), prior to conducting this research the approval to get official access as a researcher for conducting the research within the organisation was obtained from the Human Resource Manager. The request for approval from the gatekeeper clarified a number of elements related to this research such as the topic of the research, the objectives, the data collection methodologies, the duration of the data collection, and how the data will be used. It also ensured anonymity of both the participants and the respondents.

Bryman & Bell (2011) discuss four ethical stances related to social research. The first one which they refer to as universalism is where the ends can never justify the unethical research. The second one is referred to as situation ethics stance, which they also referred to as principled relativism. This can be looked

at on a case by case basis. It is when the ends of the research justify the means or when there is no other choice in order to investigate the issues of a specific research. The third stance is the argument that all researches involve elements that are at least ethically questionable. The fourth stance is referred to as *anything goes*. In this stance which is adopted by powerful institutions such as police and mass media there is no flexibility in ethical decision making but rather the mentality of *anything goes*. There is a long-standing debate on the overt versus covert research. For instance, Saunders *et al* (2012) argue that in order to avoid reactivity, the observations can be conducted in a covert manner. The rationale in this case will be that the ends justify the means. However, other elements should be taken into consideration. For instance, the private life details of the people should not be observed. On the other hand, there are arguments that in the covert observation, participants are not given the opportunity to refuse to be part of the research (e.g., Bryman & Bell, 2011).

When it comes to the interviews, informed consent was obtained from all the interviewees. Bryman & Bell (2011, p.133) refer to the Academy of Management Code of Ethical Conduct where informed consent from all participants is required to 'preserve and protect the privacy, dignity, wellbeing and freedom of research participants'. In this research all interviewees will be briefed on the purpose and the objectives of the research, the way data will be used, and the assurance that their identity will remain under anonymity. This is mainly to be transparent with

the participants who will be sharing their personal data, give them the option to decide whether to participate or not in this research, and to avoid deceiving them. A consent form for this research was developed to be completed and signed by each interviewee.

4.2 Ethical issues during the data gathering

Creswell (2013) lists four ethical issues that need to be considered during the stage of data gathering. Those four issues are: respect the site and disrupt as little as possible, avoid deceiving the participants, respect potential power imbalances of participants, and do not leave the site without giving any sort of rewards to the participants.

My main challenge at this stage was the possibility of interviewees feeling obliged to agree to and respond in particular ways in the interviews because of the power imbalance between myself and interviewees. In other words, how can I be looked at and perceived as a researcher and not as a CEO in the same organisation I am conducting my research within? To address that, I spent time explaining the research and the consent form with each interviewee, as well introduced ice breaking questions that exhibit me as a colleague and as researcher more than a CEO. Also, I ensured that the interviews took place in a location that is convenient to the interviewee and I ensured that I stay away from the CEO physical office. While addressing this challenge, another challenge

surfaced. It was related to choosing a place for the interview that will be away from the power that I have within the organisation, and at the same time give more freedom and space to the respondents and taking into consideration the cultural aspects. This challenge was expected to come up especially from female colleagues who normally avoid being interviewed outside the office and outside their working hours or during their lunch breaks. In one of my previous papers completed for the Exec MBA, one of the married female respondents shared that she is not comfortable being interviewed by a male in a public place such as a coffee shop or a restaurant as this might be perceived negatively by the society or by any of her relatives who happens to pass by. To address this concern, I have left the choice to the interviewees to identify the interview locations and venue and clearly mentioned it in the participant information sheet. Moreover, the cultural element was one of the most sensitive parts at this stage where I had to be very careful not to ask a question or give a gesture that will be perceived differently in the local culture or will discourage the interviewees from sharing their thoughts and views regarding the topic under consideration.

In the observation exercise which followed (participant as observer) approach the main ethical challenges were related to not deceiving the staff members. Hence, the overt approach was taken where staff members were aware of my research and the duration of the observation exercise. This was managed by the gate keeper who sent an earlier email to all staff notifying that my academic research will be using observations as one of the methods to gather data in addition to interviews and the duration of the exercise. Another ethical challenge

in the observation was to avoid covering personal discussions and other topics that were not linked to the case study. Since the observations took place in different locations such as meeting rooms, workstations and corridors, there always have been incidents where staff members used to discuss some personal matters or cover topics that were not related to the case study. In such cases, I ensured that I direct my attention to a different direction to avoid covering personal discussions. Another challenge was to strike a balance between my role as a researcher and my role as a participant in a way that I actively participate in the observation yet avoid influencing the discussion. This was managed by ensuring that I keep my opinion towards the end to ensure that it did not influence the discussions.

4.3 Ethical issues after the data collection

Saunders *et al* (2012) discuss a number of ethical concerns that need to be considered at this stage. They break this stage into two: the stage of processing and storing the data collected, and the stage of analysing the collected data and reporting the findings. Most of the ethical concerns at this stage came from the need to respect the culture, understand the sensitivities, maintaining the objectivity, avoidance to harm, and keeping the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS- FRONT STAGE AND BACKSTAGE

5.1 Findings from the interviews

Twenty-two interviews were conducted for this research representing the different demographics of the company staff members in terms of gender, education level, seniority level and origins covering both locals and expatriates. The sample included both two change agents and change recipients.

After transcribing and reading through each interview, a total of twelve themes were derived inductively from the interviews, out of which, five themes are related to the perceptions, understandings, and distinctions between front stage and backstage, which are listed below. The other seven themes are related to performances and performers skill, style and competency. Those themes are covered and discussed in chapter 6.

These five themes related to front stage and backstage are as follows:

Theme 1: Backstage performance

Theme 2: Front stage performance

Theme 3: Blurred boundaries between backstage and front stage

Theme 4: Giving access to backstage

Theme 5: The increased corridor talks

The five themes are described below in details and supported by relevant quotations extracted from the different interviewees:

5.1.1 Theme 1_Backstage Performance (preparations and rehearsals)

This theme refers to all the preparation meetings and/or the rehearsals that take place to agree on the main messages, role of the performers, the sequence of the performance, and even how to manage the audience in the front stage. In SOMC's language, as in many other organisations, backstage performances are known as an alignment meeting or preparation engagement.

In M2's perspective, backstage performances in the organisation are where the preparations happen in terms of putting a storyline and agree on the message that needs to be sent and the tone that needs to be used. He described backstage performances as *"meetings that happen behind closed doors"*.

In her views, F1 believes that in the backstage a lot of preparations happen. Those preparations include understanding the audience and understanding their concerns. It also includes rehearsing for the performance, and the languages to be used.

She explains:

"I think there are preparations. Not only in terms of the contexts of the presentations or the performance but preparations on understanding your audience, understanding their concerns, understanding their.... I mean this particular case there are different age group, understanding who your audience are? What concerns them, the kind of language you use conveying that message? And here I don't mean just the actual language Arabic or English, I am just saying the kind of terminologies to be used during the engagement and etc".

F4 had a similar view:

Interviewer: Do you think that many backstage (performances) happen when people...the performers prepare for these kinds of engagements?

F4: I'm sure there were a lot of engagements prior to this main one. I mean, I'm not sure the background here. I was not involved, but I'm sure any ... it comes to your mind how he would plan for this engagement if he haven't know there were issues in the background. People approached him. I'm sure he would go and talk to the leaders that he trust to see their opinion and best way to manage this, so I'm sure these kind of engagement took place prior, tailoring the message as well. So I don't think it was his call purely to ... that suggestion that he came up, that only corridors, because he needs some certain kinds of approvals or he needs to check with the rest of the management team if that's acceptable or not, or it defeats all the purpose. I'm sure that this type of engagement took place similarly on the other side so this happened because there were noise so who raised the noise in the first place. Same thing, so I'm sure there is some their own kind of engagement happened prior to the other party that they're trying to calm down.

In his view, being a member of the senior management team, M3 believes that backstage performances happen a lot in SOMC. He argues that those meetings happen much more than people think. He shares an example of a previous Managing Director who used to call for such meetings several times in almost every single day, which he used to refer to as alignment meetings.

He then shares a specific example:

“I remember this incident of X, with our previous MD, who wanted to manage Z, and I think you were also part of that. He gave us different roles to play and he explained what his role will be, saying I will act neutral...and then I will bring it in this format and so on and I will manage it”.

From his perspective as a change agent, M1 believes that he always prepares himself and rehearses before such engagements, whether it was with a large audience or a one to one meeting. Once he realised from the management that there are many concerns raised especially female staff on installing CCTV cameras, he arranged for an engagement with those staff members to understand and address the concerns around installing CCTV cameras. He believes he prepared well before getting into that meeting. He kept on visualizing the sequence of the engagement. He actually rehearsed his style in the engagement in the expected sequence that he pictured with three female colleagues who he said he has “*built an emotional bank account with*”. Those are colleagues who he said “*trust*” him.

“So, in preparation for that I remember, maybe if I can reflect initially, I had my thought, let me initially make sure that I test my .ahhhh.. you know, the sequence that I would use in the engagement. So, how did I test it? I selected the ladies who I trust, who are more of like, you know, kind of like, I have built an emotional bank account with them. You know, emotional bank account, they're your friends, you trust them. They already know you. They know they can trust you as well. So, they know that you are not trying to manipulate them or whatever. So, then I tested the sequence that I had in mind where I would present with the whole team, when I get the whole ladies in Sablat Al Salaam at the time, then I tested that sequence. And it was more of ahhh...okay, let me try to be genuine first of all and go through the process from start..... And I tested that kind of flow and it seems to resonate. I tested it with three, I remember, okay, before. And it looks like it resonates, so I understood that.... okay, this probably seems to be the right kind of sequence” M1

M1 went on sharing that an important part of the preparations was to speculate the sort of questions and challenges he will be facing in the front stage. Clearly part of his rehearsal when he was by himself was to anticipate some challenges and questions and prepare his answers. He then started rehearsing those

questions and answers in the backstage with his colleagues without giving any indication that he was rehearsing. Apparently, these rehearsals have worked well for M1 in addressing many potential questions during his performance in the main engagement with the staff. Also, they helped him get the story and the performance straight. This explains what F2 mentioned in her interview that she didn't have to ask some of her questions because M1 had already covered it. She explains:

"I raised my questions that I listed them. Of course, most of them I forgot because he was already answering my questions that I want to ask about it". F2

So, from the perspective of M1, even those rehearsals he was having with his colleagues were actually front stage performances for him because while he was testing his style and sequence, he was at the same time getting feedback from his audience. Most importantly he was neither revealing to his colleagues that he was rehearsing nor showing a different character of the one he normally present in the organisation and later presented in the front stage. This was like an ongoing performance even during the rehearsal. He prepared his presentation slides in the same sequence after testing it with the three female colleagues. In the interview, he later referred to those colleagues as his (soldiers) who will act as a (safety valve) for him, ensuring that they will support him in the performance if needed. He indirectly, gave them roles in the performance but without mentioning that to them. A role where if needed he might ask one of the three colleagues on her opinion, and he can be sure that she will support him.

M1 believes that backstage is extremely important to have a successful front stage performance.

Interviewer: How important was that ... were those preparations or backstage, I would say, for you to have a successful front stage performance?

M1: It was very important, because I remember when I started the session, I was confident that I would get the ... I will get a positive response. Right from the start, when I started that engagement, somehow because of the pre work that I had done, gave me the confidence that I will get what I want. I'm ready to tackle any challenges. If somebody is genuine to challenge me in logic, using logic, you know, I will defeat them, because I've already gone through the thoughts, you know?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

M1: So, the start was kind of like I'm already putting my mind here, this is going to work, I have no doubts in my mind, because I've tested the scenarios. Maybe that's also, that's important because I was confident about the communication. So when you are communicating with people with confidence, confidence means you're confident about your thoughts, about your idea

Just like the fact that backstage rehearsal and preparations happen normally by the main performers or change agents, it is realised from this research that many of the audience or change recipients do the same. They do prepare to ask questions at a specific time and in a specific style. Many of them also go and align with other colleagues to get support and to ensure that in the main engagement, their point of view comes out as of many in the organisation. When the installations of the cameras happened, M4 went on encouraging the female

colleagues to speak up against the project. He went on to the point of creating a fear in them, saying that there is a possibility that any of the female staff might be naturally fixing her scarf or gown and without realizing exposing part of and part of her body or hair. He told them that this can be captured by someone who is monitoring the cameras and might send it to his friends using his phone. Interestingly, he said that while he encouraged his team to speak up in the engagement, he decided not to talk or challenge but rather listen. He said, he felt because he is loud in the organisation, some people were trying to use him for their hidden agendas. He said that before the engagement happened few people came to him and asked him to raise concerns and speak up during the engagement. M4 explains:

"I felt some people trying to divert me in the way that because me being the loudest person around and the one who to I was talking. I felt some people try to divert me in the wrong direction, so I left the questioning to my team to ask the question without me getting involved". He also adds talking about this approach by some of his colleagues; "Different point of view?!, different agenda?!, didn't know what was hidden behind it, but I felt uncomfortable. And to doing that, so immediately I kind of became a listener, encouraged my team to ask the question that they want to ask rather than me leading the team in asking those questions".
M4

This has seen M4 moving from being a main actor on the stage to a supporting role. The same has happened with M8 who in the backstage engagements with the management was clearly opposing the project, and then once the project was approved and cleared by the management team he took a different role in front of the staff members and showed support to it.

In the same sense, F5 elaborates with another example:

Interviewer : Were there people coming to you, since they felt that you are really conveying what they probably want to say, but they cannot say? Were you approached or some colleagues came say, "M5, you know ..."

M5: Always there was corridor discussions about this. You sort of hit the nail on the head that they were scared, cautious to raise it up in a public forum in front of 50 people. I wasn't, of course, my friend next door was equally agitated, M3. I basically conveyed, when I did speak, it was not only on my behalf, but on the behalf of several people who felt the same way, that, "Why are we doing it? Why?" The why, did not come out very forcefully, I'm sure though if it had been put forward in a more humane way, more interaction rather than just with a hammer and saying, "Come tomorrow, we're going to have a CCTV camera." Then possibly it would have gone down better, because this is not a business decision, if you know what I mean. This is more to do with each individual and his privacy was being affected. Rightly or wrongly, but it was affected.

F2 recalled that some of the female staff members did not want to attend, and asked her to share with them the discussions and what will be concluded afterwards:

F2: Some of the ladies they were like "No we don't want to attend, but if you hear anything, please come and tell us." It depends on the individuals. They don't want to be in the picture itself. So I thought, why they are not talking? Is it all their questions is answered? Or they don't want to be in light, and people not to think that they are asking? I was like why ...

Interviewer: So you mean in the sense that they are afraid of speaking-

F2: Exactly, yes. But I don't know what they were thinking, but they were like just listeners. And after the meeting I was asking like why? And it was like "No, it was clear, and then what's the purpose to ask?" It's like well, you have to ask if you're not comfortable, it's okay. And she's like, "Just leave it, F2."

F6 had an encounter with a male colleague where she sensed that he was indirectly trying to influence her views to be against the project, so she can bring it up in the main engagement. This is an example of backstage work that goes on in an effort to influence frontstage.

Interviewer: Just before we go to that session ... So when you were approached by your male colleague, , do you think he was trying to influence and get an alignment from you to be against installing the CCTV?

F6: Yeah. Although he did not probably directly mention it at that time, but I could sense it.

Interviewer: Okay.

F6: It was very clear. And every time I push back or I was just trying to at least treat it from a different perspective ...

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

F6: He was trying to debate it and convince me otherwise and he was really ... He never brought up anything positive about it, so it's more about how bad it is? So, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah so. So, that time you sensed it, yeah?

F6: Yeah. It was very clear.

Another example was shared by F2 where she and few of her colleagues prepared backstage the sort of questions they will bring up in the main engagement and which questions each of them will ask.

F2: Actually, when I had the chat with M1 he told me, "On this date we will be having a meeting." I was like well prepared, okay I will ask this, I will do that.

Interviewer: So backstage, did you prepare anything?

F2: Yes.

Interviewer: With colleagues, aligning with them?

F2: Yeah.

Interviewer: So like, "Okay we need to ask."?

F2: What should we ask, and yeah-

Interviewer: Okay so can you tell me about that please?

F2: Yeah, I was talking to my colleague, a female again, at the same office.

Interviewer: Okay.

F2: Like, "Shall we ask this? Shall we do? Okay, I will ask this this, and you will keep asking about the", you know that we are not comfortable on why they suddenly start putting cameras. When they will activate it, and are we gonna be pointed at in the office, or it's generally. So these kinds of questions were there.

M8 shared a similar experience of preparations before getting into the management meeting where he was opposing the project. He said that before stepping in the meeting, he did his own work to understand who was with and who was against the project. He said he knew who will back his views from the team members which he said happened.

In a nutshell, backstage performance exists heavily in SOMC, where most of the staff know it as alignment meeting. The phrase backstage performance was new to most of the interviewees. One of the common element found in backstage performance was proper preparation that included running the different scenarios of the front stage performance as well as anticipating the questions and the challenges from the audience. This finding supports earlier works on backstage performances (e.g., Brown, 2005, Goffman, 1956, Greener, 2007),

which argue that backstage performance is mainly dedicated for preparations and rehearsals of the personalities and the characters people would like to impersonate in the front stage. The interesting thing was that this theme also showed that backstage performances or rehearsals were not only done by change agents. Change recipients (the audience) rehearsed as well, prior to attending the main performance. Many of the audience in SOMC aligned with their colleagues to ensure that their point of view or challenges came out clearly during the main engagement and is perceived as a view of a team rather than of an individual. Thus, the actors need to consider that the audience might also be preparing for the performance, and that the audience can have an impact on the performance in different ways. This finding supports earlier works in two folds. The first fold (e.g., Goffman 1956) argues that the audience seek to acquire information about the performer or bring information they already have about him or her to the performance. This information may include the conception of the performer of him or herself, his attitude towards them and his trustworthiness. The second fold (e.g., Bennett, 1998, Carlson, 1989, Heim, 2016) highlights the role of the audience in the performance. For instance, Heim (2016) argues that the audience can impact the performance either by contributing to the event or interrupting it through gestures or utterances. The interactions from the audience in the performance can come in different ways and forms like cheering, applauding, laughing, booing, speaking their thoughts

out loud and the infamous walk-away. She also argues that the audience gestures or utterances whether contributory or interruptive are contagious.

5.1.2. Theme 2_Front stage performance

The second theme that was derived from the data was front stage performance. It refers to all the meetings and engagements in SOMC where a staff member, a change agent, or a team engage with other stakeholders to present a business case, an idea or deliver a message. In those meetings or engagements, the person who is performing uses all the tools he or she has (for instance, spoken language, body language, the stage including the set up and even the furniture) to help him, her or them to successfully pass on the message to the audience. The staff members interviewed, emphasised on the importance of front stage performance to connect and build communications within the organisation.

F1 feels that front stage performances can be very successful in sending out the desired message. She referred to the engagement of CCTV cameras where she joined the meeting having upfront negative perception about it. Yet, she came out of that engagement very positive and with buy-in. In the interview with her that lasted almost one hour she emphasized more than once on the vital role of being sincere when the M1 (the performer) was engaging with the audience.

She explains:

“He was engaging... well, there were emotions in it. He showed that... he cared about us. The reason why he is implementing this is because there is genuine care about the staff, about the HSSE”. F1

F1 adds:

“I think also, when you care about something ...genuinely care about something...it shows in the performance”. She adds: “It could be a role play, it could be also just a one man show, (she laughs lightly) but, I think sincerity should be transmitted somehow to the audience”. F1

The above beliefs of F1 supports earlier work (e.g., Edwards, 2010, Henderson, 2015) on the importance of sincerity and genuineness demonstrated in the performance. (Please see Theme 6 in this research, where sincerity and genuineness of the performer are discussed in details).

Similarly, M2 had almost the same views. He believes that we are in an ongoing performance throughout the day when asked about whether the engagement regarding the CCTV was a front stage. He actually used the term *“it’s a like a whole big movie”* to describe our lives, where he believes that we move from one scenario to another or from scene to another. Interestingly, this is more or less what Goffman (1956) said, who argues that as human beings we are creatures of different impulse with moods and energies that change from one moment to another.

M2 argues:

“If you ask me personally Mohammed, I would tell you it goes through the whole of our lives. We’re all just moving from one sort of scenario to another or from one sort of scene to another. So yeah, is it a stage? I would tell you that definitely it’s a stage, but I think generally speaking we all go through life with

sort of behaving, talking in a certain way, to ensure that we send messages in a certain way as well. Yeah, so there's always an element of control. The M2 (he mentions his name) you see here is not the same as the M2 that would be sitting in his house for instance. So definitely there are ... we go through life, I would say, it's like a whole big movie". M2

In terms of having lead actors, M2 believes that looking by at human behaviour in general, or human profiles in general, we see some people who are not outgoing, and who cannot easily speak up in front of others and share their specific views. Hence, that gives a room or space for others to come as “*ring leaders*” who come forward to talk, share or pass on comments on behalf of others. Those (ring leaders) might not necessarily believe in that view, however they have taken up the role of being the public speaker for a specific group or a specific number of individuals. This finding supports Goffman (1956. P62) view that:

“when we study a routine which requires a team of several performers for its presentation, we sometimes find that one member of the team is made the star, lead, or centre of attention”.

M1 had more or less the same view that he as a change agent does not have to believe in the message that he is delivering to sound convincing. He went on saying that sometimes he had to “*fake*” that he was convinced to be able to convince the audience or the change recipients. In other words, he had to convince himself that he was convinced with the message.

Interviewer: One last question from my end. Would you go and engage with a team if you are not convinced with the messages?

M1: *Would I go-?*

Interviewer: *Would you go and let's assume that you are not convinced.*

M1: *Okay.*

Interviewer: *Because you said you don't want to go into something where..., because people are smart, they will understand you if you are not genuine. They will understand it in a few minutes, so can you be genuine while you're still not buying, or not convinced with the whole concept? but because you would sound genuine, you would be able to get an engagement done, but deep inside, you know what, you feel actually it's just, you know, it's one of the things that you have to do, because of your role?*

M1: *Yeah, I mean I had instances that I had to really kind of like try to fake that kind of like. It's there, definitely. I mean, sometime because of the role that you're doing or something, you really sometime, you have to put a play, but I think that's where things tend to be different between the success rate that you would have when you do that. What I mean, the success rate here, I mean trying to really first, when I do it, I'll tell you the style.*

Interviewer: *When I have this conflicting kind of messages in my mind that I'm probably not that much convinced about this, but I have to do it anyway. I have to somehow convince myself that it is right.*

Interviewer: *Right.*

M1: *I have to really kind of like.... aaaaa-*

Interviewer: *You have to believe in the role?*

M1: *Yes. That's the word. I have to believe in the role, so that I sound as genuine as possible. And how do I do that? Normally trying to be open to the extent that I hide probably the area where I'm trying to hide. How will I explain? Okay, maybe ... you know, trying to hide that kind of like area that probably you don't believe in that, by being open to the extent that it can easily camouflage that weak area or that kind of like ... that can send a signal that you are, you don't*

mean well. It's not easy, depending on the scenario. Certain scenarios this will be almost impossible to actually do that, because it would require really probably lots of thinking or lots of kind of like staging, you know. Like I'm putting it this way. But in many cases it's not, you know, you can easily do that, and you do it with a genuine thought. You know, where's your intention, even though you don't believe in it, but you will actually put the ingredients why that particular opinion can actually be right. Okay, why you know? Any opinion has pros and cons. You'll try to bring all of the pros, all of the things that are actually supporting that idea and present it to the people in a genuine way, while also being open about the other side of the story.

Interviewer: Right.

M1: And then you will say, okay well I mean if I just put it, this is I believe the case, one, two, three, four, because of one, two, three, four, but then I understand there's some other thoughts and it is that, that, that, but this is. You dismiss it indirectly and you push for your agenda. It's there, it goes without saying. But people in that also kind of understand that you're knowing both kind of like side of the stories, and you are open about it, and you are telling them about it, so you are not hiding anything, but you are actually pushing more for this view, even though sometimes you don't believe in it, but you are pushing for it using the ingredients, the points that support that view. And actually emphasizing on it, you know. And maybe somehow focusing more on the weaknesses of the other side of the story without people noticing that you are actually becoming unbiased.

The ideas gathered above from the interview, support Goffman (1956) view around the idea that when an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his audience to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them, yet, one of the questions that normally get raised is around the individual's own belief in the impression of reality that he attempts to perform. From one end, the performer can be fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced

that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality. On the other end, the performer may not be taken in at all by his own routine, as he may be moved to guide the conviction of his audience only as a means to other ends. This situation also brings in the arguments around the challenges and limitations of dramaturgy that have been covered in more details in the literature review.

The outcome from the interviews just supported the above two extreme interpretations of front stage performance that have been explained by Goffman (1965). While the majority of the interviewees believed that people are in an ongoing act or performance throughout the day, M3 on the other hand perceives the term (acting) in a negative manner. He believes that acting means that people are not being themselves but rather having an agenda. M3 also believes that most of the people acts all the times, while only few people are left who are genuine and direct. This brings in the same question that has been raised in many works on whether managers who are good actors are actually manipulators? (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Cunliffe, 2014, Höpfl, 2002). For instance, Cunliffe (2014) argues that from a managerialist perspective, impression management is just part of the of tools available to ensure the achievement of organisational goals, yet from a critical perspective it can be about faking emotions and identity. Höpfl (2002) concludes her paper with a discussion of the necessary hypocrisy of certain aspects of the service role and examines the psychological costs which attach to this type of performance. On

the other hand, M3 believes that acting happens extensively in SOMC at different levels to get things done through engagements and meetings. Yet he adds:

"I don't think we are all actors... I think we are all human, and being human we have our weaknesses, and have our all issues. We are all human and we are driven from our surroundings".M3

M6 initially had the same perspective that using the work (performing) means that people are not being genuine.

Interviewer: If we go within the same sort of understanding, what do you think is ... Can you give me examples of front-stage performances in Shell Oman?

M6: Okay. This is not a negative thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, its not.

M6: This is not-

Interviewer: We're not saying negative.

M6: Because usually when people use the word performance in daily way, they usually make it look like someone is not being authentic.

The audience feedback on the front stage performance of M1 varied. The majority of the change recipients looked at the performance as an engaging one where concerns and questions from the staff members were addressed in an understanding way. View views were exactly the opposite. For instance, F5 believes that:

“There was quite a good engagement because it was more of a discussion rather than being told that this is what's going to happen and that's it. But he actually got the feedback around the room and that feedback was quite taken up by the HSE manager to the management because based on that, changes again happened because the cameras are on the workspaces are removed and then they're put on the corridors.”.

Another example came from F2:

Interviewer: So he was engaging?

F2: It was two-way communication.

Interviewer: Two-way communication?!

F2: Yeah, he was hearing us, and he was taking our questions, and answering. We felt that he cared, that he cared about our concerns as females

However, one of the different feedback on the same engagement came from M5, which was completely the opposite:

“the engagement was completely missing. It was a, “I am the boss, I'm going to do it”. M5

In a summary, front stage performance, is also witnessed in SOMC. Staff engagement is a good example of that. This supports the many works that look at organisations as theatres and identify front stage performances as part of the daily representation of staff of themselves. (e.g., Beckerman, 1990, Cunliffe, 2014, Höpfl, 2002). Dramaturgical terms such as (stage performance) or (acting) are perceived negatively by some staff members in SOMC for whom such terms give an impression that those performers are not genuine. In the literature, this challenge is raised in a number of works. (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Cunliffe, 2014, Höpfl, 2002) that raises the question whether managers or service staff

who are good actors/performers are fake and manipulators. There are, however, great acknowledgements and appreciations by the staff of SOMC on the importance of these front stage performances in helping building communications between the management and the rest of the organisation. This finding supports earlier works (e.g., Cornelissen, 2004, Cunliffe, 2014, Morgan, 2006) who argue that staff engagements through front stage performance connect the organisation with its staff and can help in avoiding ambiguity on the directions and the plans of the organisation.

5.1.3 Theme 3 Blurred boundaries between backstage and front stage

This theme refers to the distinctions between backstage and front stage. One of the finding that this research is highlighting is the fact that the line that distinguishes backstage and front stage is blurred. While on the surface, the boundaries between backstage and front stage in SOMC look like they are clear, the findings from this research shows that the boundaries between them are not as clear as it feels, and it is not as simple as it may sound and described.

Most of the interviewees viewed the front stage and backstage performance the same way M2 described them. In simple terms, and as M2 views them; front stage performances are where engagements happen with a wider audience, and backstage performances are the preparation meetings that happen behind closed doors. In the front stage, the main performers try to communicate some

messages or changes to the audience, and in the backstage meetings a smaller team try to put together the storyline, the key points, the tone, etc. that will be used in the main engagement.

M6 gives an example of his understanding of front stage and backstage performances in SOMC.

He explains:

“I think that a front-stage performance would be the CEO communication. The backstage would be you engaging with your stakeholders internally to make sure, and you have your preparations done to deliver that. Maybe that also includes some of the side elements of the CEO communications like how we do it”. M6.

However, the interviews revealed that the moment there is more than one person in the event, the boundaries start getting blurred. This takes us to Goffman (1956) theory that backstage performance is when actors are by their own prepare and rehearse for the front stage without revealing themselves to their audience.

The interview with M1 showed that, once there are at least two people in the event, it is not clear even for either of the two individuals, whether that event is a backstage or a front stage. This is true even if the event is planned to be a backstage to rehearse or to prepare.

M1 shares a situation where the people involved believed that it was a backstage, but actually for him it was nothing but a front stage:

Interviewer: Right. So, did you align with them, that listen, can I get your support? Can you help me in the engagement? And if someone raised, or made concerns, you being a female colleague, would you be standing up and just speaking up your view as a female talent to balance and also give a different perspective?

M1: No.

Interviewer: Was that one of the scenarios?

M1: No, I would never do that.

Interviewer: Okay.

M1: Because I think that's what, the way I done it actually, it was more indirect. They've never felt I was testing this concept, because this is where I'm just going back again. If I was just trying to do it in that way, it will be clear to, these ladies will not trust me. They will think I'm trying to manipulate them. So, the way I engage them, even it was more of a genuine engagement. Just to get their thoughts. They never probably realized that I was trying to test my thoughts.

Interviewer: So even those were actually front stage performances?

M1: I think they were, one thing that I could certainly say that because they supported my views in the backstage, and they were actually with me, so the last thing they would've done to stand in that crowd and actually be against me.

Interviewer: What I'm saying is even when you engaged with them on a one to one basis, it is not, I don't see it as a backstage, because you didn't ... sort of ... rehearse with them. You actually had another engagement where you actually were also genuine.

M1: Yes.

Interviewer: You didn't show them what our, who are you, you basically were again that performer with them.

M1: Yes.

Interviewer: *So what's supposed to be a backstage performance, it actually ended up being also a front stage performance with them on a one to one.*

M1: True.

Interviewer: *Do you think that the ... if again using front stage/back stage, do you think there are clear boundaries between front stage or back stage? Or it's kind of blurred between?*

M1: *No, there's a clear boundary to me. I mean, there's definitely, because in the back stage, you are more secure. You have that sense of security, even if things are wrong. You have that sense of security. And this is important. That's why you test your thoughts and concept, and is it going to work or not in a more, in a secure environment, in a safe environment. Because, you know, if you're just sitting there and it failed, then the last thing you will do, you actually test the failed concept on the ... stage. So, you should know it. At least you have the confidence that you have tested in the backstage and it worked, and then when you test it, on the stage, then at least you have more chances of having a successful outcome*

For M1, the boundaries between front stage and backstage are clear. In his view, he believes that in the backstage, the performer is secured and things won't actually go wrong, which is not the case in the front stage. He also mentioned that even in cases where he was not fully convinced with the management decision on a specific topic and he was asked to engage the team, he had to do it anyway and put a play. For him, he has to believe in the role, by first convincing himself that this is the right thing so he sounds as genuine as possible. In an engagement, he tries to hide anything in his body language or his tone that shows that he is not fully convinced with the message himself. From his point of view, that mindset, takes a lot of preparations and readiness.

In a summary, the boundaries between front stage in backstage performances in SOMC are blurred, even for two individuals attending the same meetings with a pre-designed role either as change agents (performers) or change recipients (part of the audience). Apparently even if both team members are in the backstage for instance, there are still things that they hide from each other. This finding supports Goffman (1956, p.102) argument:

‘And while colleagues who compete for audiences may keep some strategic secrets from one another, they cannot very well, hide from one another certain things that they hid from the audience.’

What also matters is the agenda that each has and the way each individual looks at the topic of dramaturgy from a philosophical point of view. Also, the physical location of the performance cannot be a clear distinguisher between each of the stages, whether the engagement is happening in a corridor for example or a meeting room. This finding supports earlier work on the blurred physical boundaries between front stage and backstage (e.g., Ashforth *et al* ,2008, Darr & Pinch, 2013, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016, Ellingson, 2003, Goffman, 1956) that argue that the backstage location can be turned into a front stage once one of the audiences walks in. On the other hand, a rehearsal (backstage) can happen in the actual location of the front stage when the audience are not around.

5.1.4 Theme 4_ Giving access to backstage

Giving access to backstage refers to whom the organisation decides to involve in the rehearsals and the preparation meetings. It also discusses the elements that need to be looked at before inviting specific people and how healthy or risky it might be for the organisation to have more people in the backstage. This means the organisation decides who are the main stage performers based on their power, ability to engage and skills in front stage performance.

M2 believes that people needs to be careful who to invite to backstage performance because if they are not trust worthy they might come to the front stage with a bad intention. He explains:

Interviewer: Do you think there are consequences of people who are involved in the front stage get access to the backstage? ... let's put it that way, yeah? So you're trying to manage an engagement with the team, and then before that, you have a meeting to align, yeah? With different stakeholders in terms of preparation,, what to say?,, what are the messages?, and then someone from the audience get access to that engagement. What are the consequences of such a story or such a thing to happen?

M2: I guess it depends on the intentions of the person whose access that information. If it's someone who has an agenda of, if I can use the word industrial espionage, try and derail the whole effort, then they will be focusing on is using that sort of material and information to basically identify weaknesses or loopholes in the story. And then on the day try and hit you or confront you with those weaknesses or those gaps. However, I would say, if someone doesn't have those evil intentions, I can't see it doing any harm. In fact, I'm of the view that if people are dedicating their time to making sure they give a message well and they're being clear in terms of what they're

trying to do, I think people should be appreciative that people are spending time to make sure that they come with a structured message, other than something that is spontaneous and that this happens in the heat of the moment. So it depends on the intentions of the individual who has access to that information I guess.

M1 emphasised that even while rehearsing for the main engagement on CCTV cameras, which supposed to be a backstage performance, he never gave access to the colleagues he rehearsed with.

Despite calling the team he rehearsed with as (his soldiers) and that he used them as his (safety valves), he said he will never invite them to his backstage performance. He believes that aligning with them beforehand will make him lose his personality as a genuine person, and they will end up thinking of him as a manipulator.

Interviewer: You used the word 'soldiers'!. You had your three soldiers there.

M1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, when you had an engagement with them, I'm assuming it was one to one?

M1: Yes.

Interviewer: Or you brought the three of them.

M1: No, no, it was

Interviewer: Right. So, did you align with them, that listen, can I get your support? Can you help me in the engagement? And if someone raised, or made concerns, you being a female colleague, would you be standing up and just speaking up your view as a female talent to balance and also give a different perspective?

M1: No.

Interviewer: Was that one of the scenarios?

M1: No, I would never do that.

Interviewer: Okay.

M1: *Because I think that's what, the way I done it actually, it was more indirect. They've never felt I was testing this concept, because this is where I'm just going back again. If I was just trying to do it in that way, it will be clear to, these ladies will not trust me. They will think I'm trying to manipulate them. So, the way I engage them, even it was more of a genuine engagement. Just to get their thoughts. They never probably realized that I was trying to test my thoughts.*

Interviewer: So even those were actually front stage performances?

M1: *I think they were, one thing that I could certainly say that because they supported my views in the backstage, and they were actually with me, so the last thing they would've done to stand in that crowd and actually be against me.*

From the perspectives of the change recipients, almost every one of them wanted access to the backstage and claimed that it would have been easier change management process if they were involved one way or another in making the decision or being part of the discussions before the decision was made to install the CCTV cameras in the office.

M4 believes that in any change process, messages should be cascaded from one layer to another, which suggests that for each topic or change process, there will be a need for several backstage and front stage performances. Hence, from his point of view being a team lead, it is important to give access to backstage at least to team leads, who will help the change agents by managing their team members through explanation and addressing their concerns.

Interviewer: Do you think it would have been helpful as a team lead that you are basically engaged before?

M4: It's a change management, Mohammed, you have to cascade it. I've been through a lot of changes, change management, different organisation even here. Even if at home when you want to do some change you have to cascade things.

Interviewer: Yeah.

M4: You discuss with your wife first then you do that. I believe if after management agreeing they should have another engagement with the team lead that people have, that those people report to them directly. If discussing with the team lead and you download information, a lot of question will be raised at that time, so there is you are gonna eliminate at least 70% of their question which is gonna come later. You prepare yourself with answer.

Then the team lead themselves can prepare their team for such activity that something coming with this, what do you think? What's your concern? Is you do any change is gonna happen if you are gonna sudden, there will be a shock, people get shocked.

Interviewer: Right.

M4: You have to do it gradually, you need to communicate, cascade it slowly to everybody, and you prepare them. A lot of question would be asked. You have another engagement, you bring the question, then you start communicating to everybody. And I'd have had the CCTV project, it would have been much better implemented without all this question and enquiry, people getting worried about it. If it had been communicated before and cascaded slowly to everybody, it'd have been ...

Interviewer: cascaded, so but by bringing in the management like team leads, is this how you feel would that be in the right way?

M4: Yes, I would because see, Mohammed, we as a team lead we know our employees and we are directly with them in daily operation.

F3 shared an example within SOMC where she got access to the backstage and felt she was valued for being involved. She explains:

“I felt I was valued as well. I was being informed before those changes like in any organisational higher level takes place. I was engaged from the beginning. I was informed actually well about those changes, and what are the reasons of those changes. That was my personal feeling, and I believe when I had some discussions with some of my colleagues around here they had the similar feeling that we were engaged to ... For the things that are coming it wasn't just out of a sudden change, it was discussed or announced to the people. The level of engagement was there. It felt personal actually. It felt like we are valued in this organisation as well”.F3

In a summary, this theme supports earlier works (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016, Greener, 2007) that argue that giving access to backstage performance needs to be carefully done and managed. While, normally staff members feel valued when they get access to backstage. The access however, should not be open to all. Access should be given based on the nature of the performance, the maturity level of the people invited and the level of trust between the multiple actors.

5.1.5 Theme 5 _ Increased corridor talks

From organisational perspective, the data gathering revealed that fixing the CCTV cameras coupled with the lack of communications at least in the initial period has left a lot of room for rumours, speculations, uncertainty and a lot of

corridor talks. This has been on the expense of focus and productivity. Those corridor talks are unrehearsed performances where people feelings and thoughts are discussed. While most of the corridor talks are unrehearsed backstage performances, some of those corridor talks can be front stage performances based on the intentions of the participants.

F2 gave an example of how a corridor talk related to this project has encouraged other colleagues to immediately join:

“And then I believe I talked to one of the management team. Not just like I'm going to his office and this. I was just, he was walking the corridor and then he stopped, and then we had this chat. I'm like, Any idea what's going on? It was M3. I was like, Can you just tell me? He was like, M1 will. I said, M1 said we will talk. But shall we talk about this? And then another individual came from the office, one of the seniors. And then he was also concerned, he was like, F2 do you believe this? Because his office was opposite of my office. I'm like yeah. He said, I heard you were talking about this thing. I said Yeah. He's like, Also me, I want to know what's happening, what's going on. But it's not like we took it to HR and we did something. Because we know that there will be a communication happening”. F2

F7 shared how the situation was in corridors:

“But, mainly, it was mainly like corridor talks and engagements amongst the employees regarding their opinion about the installation of the CCTV camera, whether their comfortable with it or not”. F7

Being part of the management team and one of the change agents, M2 reflected that the main engagement was definitely not a proactive exercise but clearly a reactive one. He believed that the corridor talks were becoming too much that there was a concern of them becoming unmanageable.

M2: You get also individual staff members also walking into your office or when they bump into you somewhere in the office also commenting and talking about it. Yeah. So definitely there was the call of the hour was to have some sort of organised engagement session, otherwise these Chinese whispers and these , you know -

Interviewer: Corridor talks?

M2: Corridor talks will just continue and escalate to a stage where it becomes something that is just completely unmanageable. Yeah

In a nutshell, corridor talks are normally part of many organisation's behaviour. Many time they are unavoidable, especially in an open space working environment or when the corridors are connecting the working spaces. While some research looks at them as of little value (Downey *et al*, 2007), and some organisations try to minimise them through stretching the team members to more action-oriented tasks, other feel that, in some industries like hospitals for instance, corridors are a place for intensive productivity, and corridor talks are of significant importance. (e.g., Gonzalez-Martinez *et al*, 2016, Iedema *et al*, 2005, Long *et al*, 2007). Other views argue that corridor talks can help staff to know what is going on around them (Herbsleb and Moitra, 2011). However, this can be counter argued, that this can make a good platform for gossips and ambiguity within the organisation. Another school of thought looks at corridor talks as a sign of a healthy organisational culture where people know each other, interacts and share their personal thoughts and feelings.

From dramaturgical perspective, while most of the corridor talks can be described as unrehearsed backstage performances where people discuss and share their feelings and thoughts, it is difficult to generalise this. Simply, because some of those corridor talks are actually front stage performances depending on the intentions of the participants.

5.2 Findings from the observations

The observation exercise was carried out for one month in the main offices in SOMC. It captured both formal and informal meetings related to the project of installing CCTV cameras not only in phase 1, which covered the main office, but also in phase 2 that covered the other two buildings namely; the Trade & Supply and the Lubricants Supply Chain buildings. The exercise was able to record a number of behaviours related to the research question. Those observations are summarised as follows:

5.2.1 Backstage performance (Behind the scenes)

Backstage performances were extensively noticed in SOMC. They happened both in closed rooms and in corridors. In many cases the management members did arrange and were part of them. Those meetings are continued to be referred to as alignment meetings. It was noticed that the term (alignment meetings) is

exchanged a lot and also observed in emails arranging or requesting them. Those alignments meetings which were mainly performance rehearsals happened so often that it felt like there are hardly any main meeting or engagement (front stage performance) that took place without having them first. The duration of the backstage performances varies depending on preparation required, the items to be discussed, the importance of the main engagement to the performers, the importance of the message to be delivered, the complications and challenges to be managed, and the expected challenges from the staff members or the stakeholders. Interestingly it was also observed that sometimes a number of staff members (audience), especially those who are vocals are invited and get access to backstage performances. This was to manage them and address their challenges beforehand, so they do not challenge the main speaker in front of a big audience, or in some cases stage some challenges in a specific way. Another phenomenon that was noticed was that some alignment meetings take place with different members of the audience one at a time while they are all part of the same main meeting (front stage performance) in a way that actors get into a meeting only aware of their own role but not sure who else is aligned. The outcome of the observation exercise supports Goffman's (1956) argument that backstage is where the real work of the organisation goes on and where conflict occurs – whereas front stage is about managing impressions.

It was noticed that backstage performance in SOMC is not only about preparing, rehearsing, or distributing roles. It also goes into challenging different views and the best way of approach. The rooms where those meetings take place get loud sometimes when different views get discussed and different believes and personality clashes. It happened that some members refuse to be part of a specific change or a message. And All of a sudden what supposed to be backstage performances become front stage performances for some members. That raised the concern of the risk of the management credibility and authenticity if a member decides to share his or her frustrations outside that room with another staff member and share with him what happened backstage.

Throughout the observation exercise related to engagements of the project, it has been noticed that many of those meetings took place in closed rooms. They were arranged to be backstage performance on how to manage the resentments of the staff, and get their understanding and buy in. The management and the change agents were seeing this task very challenging especially that the decision was already been made and the installation has already been done. It was only the noises that the staff started making that hold the management from activating those cameras till further notice linked to managing the staff resentments. Moreover, there were already challenges within the management team where few members were not supporting the project. During the observation exercise, a number of behaviours were noticed from the attendance

during these meetings. Those behaviours showed how staff members or management team members communicate and align during meetings without verbally talking. For instance, while acting as if they are checking their phones or sending an urgent email from their phones, few management team members kept on communicating to each other through text messaging to align their views during the engagement. Also, body language was heavily used to communicate, whether it was in form of nodding to show support, or in form of a body gesture to calm each other during heated discussions. Hence, the majority of those meetings ended up being clear front stage performances.

The observation exercise provided a number of insights too. For example, it was noticed that some managers choose not to actively participate in the backstage performances despite attending. While attending the meeting physically, they use that time actually getting busy sending/receiving text messages or emails using smart phones. Yet, in the front stage performance they sound and seem very supportive and active. Another insight from the observation exercise relates to the huge amount of data it normally provides. The challenge was to ensure that the relevant data are collected without being overwhelmed by other unrelated topics or behaviours.

5.2.2 *Front stage performance*

One of the main targets that each manager in SOMC receives at the beginning of the year is increasing employee engagements. The latter is an important element in the company's people survey which indicates how engaging managers are with their staff. This has led to a remarkable increase in the staff engagements. Similarly, and just like backstage performances, front stage performances take place every single day in SOMC in different ways and forms. From the observations exercise, it has been noticed that the attendance of the audience depends a lot on the importance of the topic to them, and who the performer is. Engagements that discuss staff benefits and company score card (which determines the performance bonuses) are usually very crowded. Similarly, engagements related to change programmes get the same attention and participation, for many to see what is going to be different, and for others to see whether they will be directly impacted. On the other hand, routine operational engagements do not get the same participation. With regards to the engagements related to the CCTV cameras project, many behaviours were observed from both the performers and the audience. Many of these behaviours relate to the style and the competency of the main performer, which are covered in chapter 6. However, what has been clearly noticed was that there are key participants from both sides (change agents and change recipients) that continue to perform the personality they have been presenting in the workplace. For instance, while M1 have been using a calm style to engage,

supported by his body language and narrative style, many change recipients were also reflecting who they are in the workplace by either being loud with their opposing views or building a constructive dialogue around the project before jumping into conclusions, or even being quiet. The interesting thing that was noticed was that one of the audience did not reflect who he normally is outside of that engagement. While, he was opposing the project before the engagement in small gatherings, he did not share his views in the main engagement, but rather kept on whispering to the people next to him that this engagement was a tick in the box exercise, and that the decision was already made by the organisation.

5.3 Discussion

While the data that were gathered aimed at answering the research main and secondary questions, the interviews and the observations have allowed and provided extended insights to many behavioural related to people as well as to SOMC as an organisation. However, before those insights are discussed, it is essential to revisit and discuss the following questions that this research is aiming to address:

I. What is seen as front stage performance in SOMC?

II. What are backstage performances in SOMC?

III. Are there clear boundaries between front stage and backstage? Or

IV. Are they blurred?

I intentionally cover the above four questions under the same discussion. The data gathered for this research show that the perception of front stage performance varies from an individual to another. It depends a lot on the reading of the individuals of the performance. It also depends on the role that individual plays in the performance itself, and their intentions before stepping in, or while the performance is taking place. What is seen as a backstage performance to one, may be looked at as a front stage to another. This can even be the case despite that both individuals may come from the same side, being either both change agents or change recipients. It also depends on how each individual look at the topic of dramaturgy from a philosophical point of view without necessarily being familiar with the academic works. While both front stage performances and backstage performances are witnessed extensively in SOMC, interestingly, dramaturgy terms such as social acting and stage performance can still be perceived in a negative way by many. The first impressions that many interviewees got from the terms (acting) or (stage performance) that someone is not being himself, or someone who is not genuine. In SOMC, and most probably in many organisations, front stage performance is usually referred to as an engagement or a meeting where a number of topics are discussed or a message is conveyed. These meetings can be in any location that can accommodate the attendance (usually an office, a meeting room, a hall, or even a corridor). They can also take place virtually where people are attending via an audio or a video conferencing facility. On the other hand, backstage performance is generally

known as an alignment or a preparation, where normally access is given to a relatively fewer individuals. Quoting M2;

“Backstage are the meetings that happen behind closed doors. So the sort of the prep meetings that I think you referred to it earlier, I would consider those as backstage type of meetings, yeah. Where you're sort of trying to put together the storyline, how exactly you want to pass the message, and what tone you want to make that message. One of the key points that you need to get across, etc ... so all those types of meetings and gatherings, I would refer to as the pre-planning stage or sort of backstage if you will”.

The interesting thing is that even in those alignment meetings which are supposed to be backstage performances, they happen to be front stage performances to some, who ensure that they don't reveal their personal stand on the topic but rather decide to perform the role that they have to play in the organisation in that specific engagement for being their (job) or for any other agenda. Also, for them revealing their true feeling and belief will lead to them possibly losing the crowd and their trust moving forward.

Hence, the data gathered for this research suggest that the boundaries between front stage performance and backstage performance are blurred. This is mainly driven by the realities of the individuals versus the role they play in the organisation. In addition, the personalities of each performer and the different layers they cover themselves with, along with the intentions of the performer play another role in having the line between each stage blurred.

V. What are the consequences when there are no clear boundaries between front stage and backstage?

VI. Do boundaries need to be managed in some way?

Having no clear boundaries between front stage and backstage can lead to a number of consequences including compromising confidentiality of future organisational plans that get discussed backstage. This can leak information that are not yet to be disclosed. Also, having no clear boundaries will create unnecessary pressure from the audience who get involved in the process way too soon.

From the performers/change agent perspective, not having clear boundaries will not allow them to know when to perform and when to rehearse. This will jeopardise their own way of thinking in a way they might be involving the audience in their rehearsal without understanding the risks and mitigating them. It is the role of the performer/change agent to manage the boundaries between backstage and frontstage.

VII. Is it helpful to give multiple actors access to backstage performances?

While the majority of the change agents felt that giving them access to the backstage will help in cascading the change messages quicker to the wider team, the main change agent clearly mentioned that he will never do that. Knowing that the performance needs supporting roles, giving access to backstage would be

required sometimes. Giving access to backstage performance needs to be carefully done and managed based on the scenarios and the level of trust between the multiple actors. frontstage. In organisations, the decision makers need to assess how tight these boundaries need to be watched and who gets access to backstage.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS- PERFORMERS AND PERFORMANCES

6.1 Findings from the interviews

In chapter 5 we discussed the themes that were derived from the data collection and were categorised under front stage and backstage. In this chapter, we discuss the additional seven themes that were also inductively derived from analysing the data, but categorised under the performances and the performers skills, style and competencies. These themes are listed below starting from theme 6 to theme 12:

Theme 6: Sincerity and genuineness

Theme 7: The importance of body language

Theme 8: The importance of pre-change communications

Theme 9: The cultural aspect

Theme 10: Using metaphors in the performance

Theme 11: Using storytelling in the performance

Theme 12: Audience feel being respected and valued

The seven themes are described below in details and supported by relevant quotations extracted from the different interviewees:

6.1.1 Theme 6_Sincerity and Genuineness:

Staff members believe that personal values related to genuineness, sincerity and trustworthiness perceived by them as audience (change recipients) in the character of M1 being the change agent, were decisive elements in accepting the message and eventually the change. They also used other descriptions such as, transparent, authentic, honest, trustworthy, respectful, compassionate and caring, describing the character of M1, not only during the engagement, which they felt was clear, but also in his day to day dealings with them. They felt that those characters were decisive elements in believing in him and accepting the change message. Tapping on emotions and sharing personal experiences are supporting tools that also assisted building trust and sincerity.

F1 argues that:

“I think people act all the time. Sometimes they need to impress senior management or their bosses or a colleague just to be liked ..you know... for whatever reason. So .. I think we all act. Some act more than others, but... I guess we all do act but sometimes you buy it because it's genuine, because it feels genuine and sometimes you don't” F1.

F2 said, she actually switched her views from being against the project to supporting it after attending the engagement. She refers to the fact that the change agent was very caring during the front stage performance.

Interviewer: So it actually moved you from one extreme of saying no To the other extreme of saying ...

F2: Yes. Agreeing and accepting it. I felt valued Mohammed, to be honest, in that moment when someone will ..come, he came individually and he was talking and he was listening to us and we were talking. I felt yes, back to that comfort zone that this is my place, I'm spending my hours here, I'm comfortable a little bit and it's fine.

Interviewer: Did you believe, or you feel he was genuine? So when he was showing his care, did you feel, did you believe that he really cared?

F2: He was going around, sometimes he comes close to the individual, because ladies, we don't speak loudly. Some of them they were really talking in a very low volume so you have to come close and ask.

Interviewer: So that made you feel he's close even to you.

F2: Exactly. He cares, that's why he came close and he want to hear clearly. Yes. We felt like whatever he was saying, he was meaning it, yeah

F7 used the term "Genuine" to describe M1:

"If I wanna look at the mirror now, or if I want to fix, let's say, her scarf. So, he took it seriously. He said, "Please, feel free. Just forget about it. And, you are not being observed at all." He didn't even, like, say you need to do it in a different place. Because, if he said that, she will feel as if he is giving her a direction. Yes, you can't do it in front of the CCTV. This is what made me feel that he was very genuine, he was very honest. He told her, "No, just feel free to express yourself. Feel free to be the same, nothing change." He even mentioned, "Don't change anything, just be yourself." F7

F4 used the term (trustworthy) describing M1:

F4: He was a likable person as well and trustworthy, and that's how people view him. So that's a ... I'm sure it's going to play a big role.

F4: but if you recall ... and he was the kind of person that you would trust.

Interviewer: So trustworthy is ...?

F4: He's the kind of person that you can feel that he's honest. I mean, I don't know, maybe we have talked to him or worked with him for many years, so that's my experience with him. From my point of view, I dealt with him. He's trustworthy, he's honest. He has the interests of people in his mind. You can see that from his behaviour as well, taking care of issues. It was not just a job that he did from day-to-day.

Clearly from the responses of many interviewees, they believed that M1 was not acting or putting a performance but being himself. On her views towards M1 personality, style, and character, F5 gave almost the same description using different words:

“He's a very charismatic person, very calm. He's very patient. So, even with people interrupting him as he presented, he was still very calm, very patient, and quite understanding. So, I think the way that he was able to engage the audience is what really helped for us having left the room feeling that, "Okay. I feel that I can trust Khamis to pass on the message. I can trust the HSE manager to pass on the message to the management. I feel that the aspect of empathy that he did feel, because this is a male addressing females. So again, you'll not feel quite comfortable, a male addressing a female issue, because it was females in the room. But then it was being addressed by a man. But just how he carried himself, his characteristics of charisma, empathy is quite outstanding”. F5

In her reflections on the performance of M1 in the main engagement, F1 believes that:

“the reason I guess why I thought it was positive is because it came across as sincere..... And also because he (the performer) tapped into some personal experience.. So that gave it an element of... Just made it feel more genuine”. F1

She elaborates:

“He was engaging... well, there were emotions in it. He showed that... he cared about us. The reason why he is implementing this is because there is genuine care about the staff, about the HSSE”. F1

F1 believes that people act all the time and that people buy the act when it feels genuine to them. She mentioned that when people feels there is no difference between the ways the performer acts onstage compared to his performance backstage then they see him as sincere. On the other hand, the more different there is between both performances the more the performer comes as a fake.

She explains:

“some people act in a way that doesn’t seem like it’s an act. It seems a natural thing. I think we act in a certain way when we are alone than when we do when we are with other people. I think when there is not a big difference between the way you act when you are alone and the way you act when you are in from of people. I think it will show more sincere. The more difference there is the more it comes across as fake”. F1

She believes that sincerity in the act is the main element that makes a specific performance better than another. She also believes that it is both being genuine and knowing the topic are the important tools a person needs to get a buy in from the audience. This clearly demonstrates that the audience are knowledgeable and can determine to a large extent when someone is fake. It also indicates that because of this, the audience play an active role in the play. In the same manner, F7 highlighted the way M1 was listening to the concerns of the female staff and described him as a genuine person:

Interviewer: You said he was genuine.

F7: Yeah.

Interviewer: What makes you feel that he was? What did he do or say to give you that impression?

F7: Just by him listening to the concern of women and understanding them, not taking them in an ironic way. Because, sometimes... For example, when the makeup thing came up, any man would smile-

Interviewer: Oh, so it was mentioned that I can't to fix my makeup.

F7: Yes, exactly. So, if we want to look at the mirror, she mentioned.

Interviewer: Okay.

F7: If I wanna look at the mirror now, or if I want to fix, let's say, her scarf. So, he took it seriously. He said, "Please, feel free. Just forget about it. And, you are not being observed at all." He didn't even, like, say you need to do it in a different place.

Because, if he said that, she will feel as if he is giving her a direction. Yes, you can't do it in front of the CCTV. This is what made me feel that he was very genuine, he was very honest. He told her, "No, just feel free to express yourself. Feel free to be the same, nothing change." He even mentioned, "Don't change anything, just be yourself."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

In his view, M4 feels that the fact that many female colleagues were convinced with the project post the engagement is due to the reason that M1 is trusted among female colleagues and that's why they were convinced with his performance. While he also feels that M1 is trustworthy, yet, he said that he wasn't impressed with the performance of M1 in the engagement. He mentioned that he felt that the whole engagement was not to discuss but rather to justify, since the decision was already made. He feels that a successful performance should clearly cover the processes and the steps of the change and not only the questions and answers.

But it wasn't only female colleagues who believed that M1 was genuine, honest, and trustworthy. Many male colleagues used more or less the same terms to describe his character. M2 believes that being transparent and sincere during the engagement along with having more than one senior person in the same

engagement emphasising on the message were important elements in having that engagement to be successful. He believes that failing to come across as a sincere person will have the opposite effect coming from the audience:

“Definitely having a clear storyline is important. Being able to get the audience to relate to what you're trying to do and trying to achieve I think is another key success factor, that you need to have in case. And you as a presenter or as someone who's passing the message, you definitely need to come across as being sincere. I think if you don't come across as being sincere, then that level of trust with the audience breaks down and more or less no one then believes what you're trying to say. And you end up in a situation where you're trying to get people aligned with you, but you end up having the opposite effect with people not believing you and not agreeing with what you're saying”. M2

On the performance of M1, M2 emphasised on the transparency, compassion and sincerity that M1 demonstrated in the engagement:

“My view I think he was very very transparent. Very very compassionate about the whole exercise. Yes in one spot, I think it's probably a major KPI for him that he had to achieve, but I don't think in any way, any of the feedback or answers or comments or actions that he took were insincere in any way” M2

From his end, M6 described M1 as a genuine person:

Interviewer: It was mostly handling those questions. How do you feel he was addressing those concerns?

M6: He was ... I will say something. He is a genuine person, until today I feel that. He came across like he means what he said. He took care in to some extend, I mean, any question that was thrown at him he would take time to explain what he means or what he was trying to do.

M8 had had the same view on the importance of authenticity, but he felt that authenticity was missing from the people who were pushing for this project. He explained that for him to accept a message from a change agent, the person has to be genuine, has authentic reasons, and is running the change because it will lead to good things for the organisation and the people. He believes that resistance to change do happens sometimes if the audience fail to see those characteristics in the change agent, which he believed was the case in this project.

One of the most interesting findings was that while the majority of the change recipients as well as the second change agents felt that the main change agent (M1) has been sincere and genuine in the engagement, the view from M1 on his own performance was that he stepped in the engagement playing his role in a way that he sounds innocent.

M1: and I was trying to totally dismiss all of their concern. But how did I dismiss their concern? It was played in such a way that I sounded innocent.

Interviewer: Right.

M1: You get what I mean? I sounded innocent and I sounded innocent, and with at that time, I was also believing that. I did believe in that I am innocent in dismissing their-

M1 feels that he stepped in the engagement believing in his story and message. He feels that it is very important because people can tell if someone is genuine or rather trying to manipulate them. He said that he wanted to come across “as *genuine as possible*”, which he believes is a “*skill*”. Throughout the engagement he was also observing the body language of the audience, to ensure that they emotionally connect with him, trust him, and “*buy*” what he is saying. In Addition to that, he ensured that he addresses all their concerns. Yet, for that he tried to show them that those concerns are not real by making those concerns sound very light, being thought of and already addressed and covered by the management.

To dismiss all their concerns, he ensured that he sounded innocent. The interesting thing here is that, while performing and trying to sound innocent, he actually started believing that he was innocent at that same moment on stage.

Moreover, for him to explain the importance of CCTV, he purposely increased their security concerns. He mentioned that there are female staff who stay late and having CCTV cameras will add an additional level of security and it is for their own safety to place it. He believes that creating that fear has given him an edge, but he ensured that he sounded genuine when he mentioned it.

He explains:

“Whenever people perceive you as genuine; it works, regardless whether you are actually genuine or not”. At the same time, he believes that to sound genuine there are a number of things a person needs to do. He believes that “body language can send very powerful signals and the right message to the people without having to focus a lot on what you say”. M1

He believes that this can create that emotional bond between the performer and the audience.

F8 called this an “emotional blackmail”:

F8: So, you know he played the emotional blackmail, it's for us you know. So, yeah.

Interviewer: Why do you say 'emotional blackmail'?

F8: I like this term because it's the reality sometimes ... This is the reality, but sometimes you know people they don't understand until you touch a pain from them.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay.

F8: Yeah,

Interviewer: And he did that?

F8: It's in a good way

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah of course, I'm not debating that, but I'm just ... The term-

F8: *I use it- for- in a positive way.*

Interviewer: Yes. Yes.

F8: *Like you know sometimes ... Some people that are against something and how you convince them by seeing their needs.*

F1 shared another example where she (did not buy the act), mainly because the performer was someone who did not demonstrate specific behaviour in the way he operates and works and then all of a sudden comes on stage and tries to lead the people to do what he is lacking. Hence the credibility of the performer was missing.

She explains:

“I think if someone is performing in a particular way in most days, and then stands in front of a big audience and try to convey a different message performing in a different way, you feel there is clash or conflict in the two images or the two performances that you just don’t buy it”. F1

In summary, this theme identifies the importance of some characters that need to be demonstrated by the performer in his dealing and engagement with the audience. The credibility of the performer in the overall performance is important to demonstrate on and off stage. Personal values like genuineness, sincerity and trustworthiness perceived by the change recipients as audience in the character of the change agent, were decisive elements in accepting the message and eventually the change. This theme supports earlier works (e.g., Edwards, 2010, Henderson, 2015) that conclude that staff members believe that

authenticity, honesty, sincerity and genuineness perceived by the audience (staff members) in the performance (role play or act) of the change agent or the performer is a decisive element in accepting that message in a change context. Tapping on emotions and sharing personal experiences are supporting tools that can assist building authenticity and sincerity. Also, another finding in this theme is that when performer keep having the same general character with the same audience, that builds on his credibility and connection with the audience. This finding supports Goffman (1956) argument that when a performer plays the same part to the same audience on different occasions, a social relationship is likely to arise.

6.1.2 Theme 7_ The importance of body language

In this theme, body language refers to all the body gesture, signs, face expressions that are used during the performance. In this theme it does not only cover the body language of the performer but also the ability of the performer to understand the body language of the audience.

The importance of body language in the performance to help in getting the buy in of the audience was mentioned a number of times especially by the main change agent who emphasised that it is a very important tool for him to help him (sound) sincere.

Interviewer: You said, at that minute you tried to be innocent!

M1: Yes.

Interviewer: You tried to make sure that you are...

M1: Sound innocent.

Interviewer: Sound innocent?

M1: Yes.

Interviewer: So, is it the body language, is it listening more, is it the tone that you're using? How do you do that?

M1: I think, to me, I'll probably look into more of the body language is a very powerful tool. And I did probably learn that. You know, sometime I'm not good in talking that much, but I can really, I think this is at least my own perception, I think body language, the way you talk, the way you find that even when I talk, I use lots of body language. I move my hand, my body, that's already part of me. I think the body language itself can really create that kind of connection with the people I'm using it now. I'm talking to you, and I could see that I'm using it indirectly just to try and probably unconsciously is actually to influence you, to believe my thoughts. I think that's probably, I'm just trying to reflect. But it looks like this is something that I've learned over the years that using the right body language can really send a very powerful signal or like send the right message to the people without even having to really focus on what you see.

M1 argues that:

“body language is very powerful. One, because people can easily tell from your body language. They can connect and try to create that emotional bond between you and the people who are actually listening to you”. M1

Talking about the performance of M1 and the way he was connecting with audience in the engagement, M7 explains:

“It could be his style, because he's very friendly. He connects easily. He smiles a lot, I remember that, which brings comfort in the discussion”. M7

In his view, M6 believes that building eye contact is one of the main elements that a performer needs to be good at in order to engage his audience. He believes that not being able to build that connect with the audience, will end up being like reading from a teleprompter and just pass through the message without building eye contact and connecting with the audience. A similar view on the importance of body language comes from F1 who believes that eye contact, body language, and voice tone can be more important than presentation slides or supporting videos. Similarly, M3 emphasises on the importance of body language in the communication. He argues:

'I think body language speaks a lot... Your tone...Your body language are more important in the communication... but sometimes it's not only the body language... it's the look, the personality...if someone is tall and comes dressed properly..his persona speaks' M3

What was also noticed that a couple of interviewees emphasised on the 'calmness' that M1 had been demonstrating through his body language and face expressions, which were part of the elements that helped engaging the audience. For instance, in her interview, F5 elaborates on what she felt the calmness of M1 helped engaging the audience:

(He is) "very calm. He's very patient. So, even with people interrupting him as he presented, he was still very calm, very patient, and quite understanding. So, I think the way that he was able to engage the audience is what really helped for us having left the room feeling that, "Okay. I feel that I can trust M1 to pass on the message... I can trust the HSSE manager to pass on the message to the management". F5

The same view came from F3, who explains:

“he's a bit ... Looking at the area that he was handling it just seemed as a very deep area. He is always a very calm person who actually listens to their concerns, and then try to observe, and then try to make simple solutions or ideas”. F3

In a summary, body language plays an important role in the performances in SOMC. It can sometimes compliment the message that is verbally delivered, and sometimes it can be more effective than the verbal message itself. Using the body language effectively as well as being able to understand the body language of the audience are key tools for effective performance especially in a culture like Oman where face values are taken as part of the first impressions. This supports past studies which highlights the importance of body language in front stage performance as well as in change management. (e.g., Bishop, 1985, Brown, 2005, Gabbott & Hogg, 2000, Conbere & Herohiadi, 2006, Rixon *et al*, 2006, Row, 2015). For instance, Rixon *et al* (2006) carried a research on the facilitators' perception of language use in facilitation. One of the themes of their research strongly indicates that body language is as important as spoken language in a change management context; sometimes it is more important. Also, the findings of this study outlined in Theme 6 indicate the importance of understanding the body language used by the audience that reflects an acceptance or a challenge to the performer (e.g., Bishop, 1985, Dallas, 2015, Wood, 2005) For instance, in her work, 'What are they thinking?: How to read and respond to your audience's body language?', Wood (2005), highlights the importance of the performer's ability to read the body language of his or her

audience. She argues that during the performance, the audience might give hints that they want to move on to another point or are ready to leave the room. This kind of (reading) will help the performer to continue, adjust or change his or her style during the performance. Moreover, it will help to emphasise on a specific message or build connections with the audience.

6.1.3 Theme 8_ *The importance of pre-change communications*

While running the interviews, it became apparent that the organisation missed or underestimated a basic and an important step while running the change programme for the case study under consideration. It appeared that the management went on and installed the CCTV cameras without running any sort of pre-change communications or engagements outside the management team. Keeping in mind that the topic relates to the entire staff members in SOMC and being a sensitive one, it was not surprising so find out that the missing of the pre-change engagement had made many staff members angry and upset with the way the project was managed. Reacting to this, the management of SOMC had to eventually put a lot of reactive plans to manage the situations, by investing a lot of time and resources for it.

As a change agent, M2 believes that the noises and commotions associated with installing the CCTV cameras go back to a number of reasons. One of

which, was the fact that the installation of the cameras was not done in a transparent way. He explains:

“I mean for one, I think from the implementer's perspective as well, the installation of these cameras was not being done in a very transparent way. When I say in a very transparent way, I don't think there was any sort of formal engagement or communication plan that has been put in place to engage with the various stakeholders about what the company was doing in relation to CCTV cameras. Why I say that is because I do recall in one of the engagement sessions that we had in Sablat Al Salam, where actually I stood up and talked about the project was the latter stages of the project. There was a lot of noise and commotion that came across from the room from a number of individuals, both male and female colleagues as well. The other perspective as well, I think it's from the individual perspective, I'm sure not everyone will be feeling very comfortable, seeing the CCTV camera over their heads or close to where they are. So the feeling of being personally ... although technically no one is actually looking at the footage actively, it's only as and when we need to go back to a specific recording. But just the thought that there's a camera close by and people could potentially see what you're doing, I feel also must have caused some feeling of uncomfortableness or ... yeah. Or fear”. M2

This kind of resentment and bitter feeling was noticed during the interview with M4. It was clear from the responses of M4 that he was very upset that the engagement with the staff happened after the cameras were installed and not before that. The fact that an engagement eventually happened didn't take the bitterness taste away from his mouth.

He explains:

“it was a little bit scary at that time. And I blame the company at that time, I blamed a lot actually the company, and the management that such a decision being taken and no communication being communicated”. M4

Referring to the non-existence of pre-change communications, and how surprising the installation was to them, many change recipients used statements like:

“That was an unusual thing happen. It was.. happened suddenly”. F2

“When the installation happened, quite a lot of us were quite surprised as to why there has been instalment of CCTV cameras. I think some of the girls took it upon them to just get clarity from the then HSE manager, just to understand why the CCTV cameras are being installed”. F5

“Once we came to office and we saw the cameras installed and ready that created a lot of corridor talks in between the employees and particularly a lot of ladies were not very comfortable with the idea”. F6

“We came to the office and there were CCTV everywhere and everyone-everyone was really concerned. I can say mainly ladies” F9

A similar view came from M5 who believes that the installation was a done deal and the engagement (the performance) was a one-way communication.

He mentioned:

“Also, the engagement was completely missing. It was a, am the boss, I’m going to do it.” M5.

Describing the project, M5 used statements like:

“the process wasn’t democratic” and

the installation *“was kind of rammed down our throat”*.

A complete opposite view to the ones from M4 and M5 came from M6 who feel that installing CCTV is a company decision, and not the staff. He feels that SOMC should have implemented this directly without debating it with the staff members. He also mentioned that he was personally indifferent about the CCTV cameras, yet he attended the engagement mainly hoping for some *“entertainment”*.

M6 explains:

“To me, at the time, I was ... I am, by nature, a curious person. I went to see what's going to happen and hoping for some entertainment. We got it, a little bit”.
M6

He shared that he left the engagement while it was going on because he felt that the entire discussion was about something that should not be debatable, and it was taking so much time and energy from everyone.

A similar view came from M7 who felt that SOMC should have been more aggressive in installing the CCTV cameras because there was a HSSE need for it. Yet, he believes that missing the pre-change communications had led to all these debates. He elaborates talking about the need for M1 to have built those communications with the staff members before installing the CCTV cameras:

“So I think it's a sequence of, I would say, communication chains that did not happen. Had he outlined that, I think the voices of people who were disagreeing will be lower. Because then their concerns will be dealt with, attended to”. F7

In a summary, pre-change engagements are important to have, and not to underestimate. This supports many works on the importance of such engagements in a change context. (e.g., Johansson and Heide, 2008, Kotter, 1996), which emphasise that pre-change communications help minimising change resistance. Also, it helps avoiding the staff members putting their time and energy getting into speculations, rumours, and a lot of corridor talks. That time and energy can be directed instead towards productivity and organisation's strategies.

6.1.4 Theme 9 _ The cultural aspects

The local cultural aspects in this context covers the believes, the values, and the social customs and traditions. In an organisation that operates in Oman and where the majority of the staff members are locals, it was not a surprise that one of themes that extracted from the data analysis is related to the cultural aspects. F2 mentioned the cultural aspects a number of times in her interview. She shared that she was not initially comfortable with the idea of having the CCTV cameras being on top of her head, especially for her being a female and from a culture like Oman. She mentioned that she felt that her privacy was intruded and she could not anymore comfortably fix her scarf or take out (ladies stuff) that she keeps in her drawer. However, she mentioned that in his main engagement, M1 was very understanding to the cultural aspects and ensured that he addresses them during the engagement along with all other concerns.

Interviewer: I just need to understand, so what were your, you said being a female and in Oman, so what was your concerns?

F2: That I might do any movement, you know? Fixing my scarf, for example, or taking my personal stuff. I didn't know, Mohammad, how the camera is working. Is there like, I just imagined, you know like there is an office, there is screens, and there are some individual watching the cameras like security and stuff. I didn't understand what was going on, so. I'm monitored, you know that feeling?

Interviewer: So more careful to ensure that your scarf is perfectly-..

F2: Scarf, abaya (ladies gown), and you know my personal stuff I put in the drawers. I can't give more details but it is something I have to be, even my colleagues when they are around, I'm careful. The way I sit, the way I, so ... Different when it's, so that was my concern. . You know, as a female you probably need specific stuff you need to carry with you, sometimes you have to go to the restroom.

F5 who comes from a different country and a different culture shared that:

"I think it's more of a personal take as to how individuals felt. Speaking on my behalf is that I was quite okay with the installation of the cameras, maybe based on the culture as to where I come from. So, you find changes happening without communication". F5

F6 shared that she did not use the cultural lens when she initially looked at the project. However, she said that it was one of her colleagues who brought that to her attention. She mentioned that he made her realise that there are other aspects to this project. From her point of view, the colleague explained to her that with the spread of social media applications, anyone who will be monitoring the CCTV cameras screen will be in a position can take a video of a moment when she is fixing her scarf or having a corridor chat with a colleague in a way that it can misinterpreted to spread it virally.

She elaborates:

"Yeah, so that was it. And then I remember, I was called by one of the, senior management team members as well at that time and the first question he asked me was, "What do you think about it?" And I said, "Yeah it's good." At that point in time, I didn't have anything negative against it. And he started talking more about what if, what if, who would watch these videos. What if I just talk to you as a colleague and we just talk as usual and this could be misinterpreted by someone else, a family member of yours or mine. You know, so that's what he said". F6

F7 believes that the way M1 demonstrated his understanding of the cultural aspects helped calming down the audience's concerns.

Interviewer: I came to understand that the M1, actually, went on tapping on his understanding of the culture, being like a brother to them.

F7: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: And, he confirmed that, you know, "I understand your privacy. I understand the culture here, your religion and all of that."

F7: It's true. He mentioned that.

Interviewer: Did you feel that, that really helped to calm them down?

F7: Of course, because simply M1 was so much focused about that this is part of the process, security. And, he was very understanding and very genuine in his feedback, when they mentioned about their concerns, the woman.

M1 shared his thinking process when handling the cultural aspects. She said that the first he did was to acknowledge that there is a cultural issue that needs to be addressed. He explains:

“So, I remember one of the issues that was raised during the ... we had the meeting with the management. And of course there was the objection towards the project and one of the key elements that they were a phrase of, because of the Omani culture of.. ladies would be not happy about this, and they would not support it, and they kind of like highlighted that they have received an already feedback from the female population of the company that they are totally against that, the project”. M1

He further explains:

“One of the cultural concern were And they say, somebody will be, I don't know, having a casual talk in the corridor, so ... and that will be misused as being like initiating personal relations or something. Within the Omani culture, this can actually be problematic, and even probably in other cultures, not only in Oman culture” M1.

M7 believed that M1 was able to demonstrate through the engagement that he was able to understand the local culture and context, and hence being able to manage a lot of culturally sensitive concerns. M7 explains:

“From M1 side, I think that's ... that was very clear. He also understands the culture context of this, but that's why I think he left this to the people to decide.... I think he allowed the other party also to express their views, as well. And he allowed the culture and sort of context to be part of a final decision when it's made”. M7

In a summary, cultural aspects such as the beliefs, the values, and the social customs and traditions are extremely important to relate to and be aware of when managing a change process or in a stage performance in SOMC. Relating to the cultural aspects during a performance demonstrates the performers ability to understand the audience needs and challenges. Also, relating to the local cultural sensitivities shows respect to the audience and build connection with them. This supports the earlier works on the importance of understanding the local cultures in organisational performances. (e.g., Conbere & Herohiadi, 2006, Biehl-Missal, 2011, Badham *et al*, 2015, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016). For instance, using front stage and backstage approach, Ekstrand & Dammand (2016) carried out a case study to explore the employee perceptions of control over work-related demands. They concluded that social aspects, such as culture strongly influence number of behaviours and perceptions in organisations. Most of these works however, looks at the local culture from a Western culture perspective, while this research looks at the organisation and the audience from Omani cultural point of view.

6.1.5 Theme 10 _ *Using metaphors in the performance*

Most of the definitions of the term metaphor revolve around the orbit of being a figure of speech, where a word or a phrase is used to refer to another thing. (Cleary & Packard 1992, www.dictionary.com). In the literature there are a

number of examples where metaphors have been applied in change management. (e.g., Cunliffe, 2002, Küpers, 2013, Oztel & Hinz, 2001, Palmer and Dunford, 1996). For instance, referring to Weick (1996), Cunliffe (2002) gives an example of the way “fire-fighting” metaphor was often used by education administrators to describe their experiences and how that was articulated to create new perspectives leading to better practices. In his work, *The Living Company: Growth, Learning and Longevity in Business*, De Gues (1997) gives several examples of how metaphors are widely used in organisations, using Shell as an example, a company he served for 38 years. For instance, he describes how the metaphor of a ship was used many times by the chairman of Shell in many public statements (front stage) to describe the organisation, using phrases like ‘weathering the storm’, or ‘changing tack’ and ‘setting a course’. De Gues (1997) describes how the metaphor of a ship can be connected to a company. He argues that in a company, as on a ship, there is a defined command structure with everyone in some sort of specialised activity. Some people run the machine room, some lift the anchor and hoist the sails. The boss known as the ‘Captain’ or the ‘Skipper’ exercises the necessary degree of control and discipline to ensure the ship and crew act in unison. In the same metaphor the ship is an asset manned by people. It sails from a destination to another to make profits for the owners.

The use of metaphors was also used by M1 in the engagement with the staff to present the CCTV project and address their concerns. The main challenges and

push backs M1 received in his CCTV project were related to the privacy of the staff members and the cultural acceptance. Female staff members were the main population opposing the project. In order to manage those challenges, M1 started using the metaphor of *family members* in his language and messages to refer to the staff in his engagement. For instance, he started calling the female staff as his (sisters), and that he cares for them as (a brother), and that CCTV cameras are meant to look after the security and safety of the staff members from anyone with bad intentions (bad guys). Apparently, this approach was successful and most of the audiences who were females felt that he was genuine, caring, and trustworthy.

F2 elaborates:

"So we walked in, all the ladies, and then they closed the door. And M1 was like, "Salaam-alaikum everyone". He started, and the way he started talking to us, it comforted us. It's like, "I'm here, I'm speaking to every individual, of you ladies especially. Because not just from the company part I'm coming and talking, just treat me like your brother. And talk to me, because I heard more than one female, they came and they were concerned about the cameras and stuff." F2

The interesting part was that M1 is a person who always relies on facts, incidents, policies, roles and regulations, ended up using metaphors in his language like (family), (sisters), and (brother) to (touch) the emotional side of the female staff members, to help him pass on the change message. This was a new (role) that was not previously seen in his personality and approach. Yet, using metaphors have been noticed in M1 even during the two interviews with

him, which arguably can be describes as front stage performances. For instance, describing his loyal colleagues, M1 used the metaphors of 'my soldiers' describing the colleagues whom he engaged with and was confident that they will be ready to support him during the engagement if required. He also used the metaphor of 'safety valves' describing the same colleagues whom he was intending to use only when required, whom he said he has built '*an emotional bank account*' with to refer to his ability to emotionally connect with them over a long period of time. He also used the metaphor of 'acid test' referring to his backstage performances with some colleagues where he rehearsed his approach of a topic whom he referred to as acid being a 'dangerous' topic in his point of view.

The other interesting part was that M1 mentioned that metaphorical approach and analysis did not come to his mind by design, but rather by default. From his point of view the success of that engagement is attributed to two elements. First, he feels that he was genuine and honest with them during the engagement that they trusted and believed him. Second, he believes that because he tested his communication approach backstage with three female staff members before the actual engagement, gave him the confidence and helped him to achieve his objective.

The use of family metaphor was again used, but this time by the previous Managing Director (MD) when he was trying to manage the opposing views from a number of the management team members. Just like M1, the MD started

using languages like *“I am asking you as a brother to help passing this project”*. And that the delay in this project is questioning the decision-making ability of the entire management team members.

M4 had a completely different view on this approach. Commenting on the statement that M1 made during the engagement where he told the female colleague to consider him (*like a brother*), M4 angrily said:

“Mohammed, in this kind of field you don’t say, “Consider as a brother.” You need to set a process and step in case things happened. There is nothing to do with a brotherly relationship here”.

In a summary, the use of metaphors in the performance to manage change in SOMC was witnessed in this case study. This apparently helped the change agent to get close to the audience, get their attention and successfully deliver his change message through his performance. This conclusion supports many studies on the effectiveness of using metaphors in change management (e.g., Akin & Palmer, 2000, Armenakis & Bedeian, 1992, Cleary & Packard, 1992, Küpers, 2013, Oztel & Hinz, 2001, Palmer & Dunford, 1996, Sementelli & Abel, 2007). For instance, Oztel & Hinz (2001) worked on a consultancy project to use metaphors to reduce accident rates in four Danish sugar factories. They argue that when change is the issue, the use of metaphors such as images, stories, narratives, and fairy tales foster unconscious learning process and have a bigger impact in the change process compared to formal conceptual learning.

Also, the conclusion supports earlier works that using metaphors in the communications (performance) helps in connecting employees to organisational culture, process and practice. (e.g., Cornelissen, 2004, Cunliffe, 2014, Morgan, 2006). What this study shows that other studies do not, is that metaphors and story-telling resonate easily with Omanis being part of their history and culture.

6.1.6 Theme 11 _ *Using storytelling in the performance*

Storytelling in this context refers to the descriptions of sharing stories. Due to its strong link to Islam and the Holy Quran, which uses storytelling approach in many of its chapters, storytelling became a strong part of the social customs and traditions of Oman. Moreover, storytelling was also largely used by Omanis who used to travel for trading or education in the past to describe their experiences and the places they visited.

The interviews of this research revealed that, in addition to using metaphors in his performance, storytelling was also present in the performance of M1 during the main engagement. M1 used storytelling as another tool to communicate and build connection with the audience. In one of the examples M1 took advantage of the meeting hall (stage), his role as a lead (actor) in the engagement and the attendance of female staff members (the audience) to increase their security concerns (the message). He used storytelling of previous security incidents as a vehicle to send his (message) to the (audience) in order to get their acceptance and buy in to implement the project.

Another example that he used, was sharing a personal story with the audience.

F1 explained the way M1 shared a personal story made her connect more with his performance:

“the reason I guess why I thought it was positive is because it came across as sincere..... And also because he (the performer) tapped into some personal experience. A loss in the family etc. So that gave it an element of... Just made it feel more genuine”. M1

F3 believes that sharing a personal experience, not only will make the performer trustworthy but also shows that the performer actually values you.

Interviewer: What makes a person trustworthy, and a person who is not?

F3: Once ... I think it depends on the person, on how the person values you as well, and how do you really get messages maybe from that person. Then also sharing maybe their experiences sometimes. It gives you that trust actually to ... For me, it does actually. If a person I really discuss with work related, and sometimes maybe person things as well, and I can get I would say an understanding level of agreement between both of us, I would somehow give my trust to the person because I know that the way this person thinks, how is it.

M1 shared how the style of storytelling helped him manage a difficult discussion with a senior manager in a different organisation where the manager normally goes loud to push his ideas through. M1 explains:

“He listened to me. He kind of resonated. Even his tone, the way he was receiving the whole story, he kind of like, okay... he started to perceive the whole communication in a different light”. M1

The interviews show that the change agent has used storytelling as part of his tools during his performance. This tool apparently was useful and helped

connecting the change agent to the audience and eventually acceptance to the change message. This finding supports many earlier works that argued that using storytelling was an impactful tool in change management programmes. (e.g., Badham *et al*, 2015, Boje, 1995, Dar and Pinch, 2013). For instance, Badham *et al*, (2015) worked on introducing a reflective framework that is capable of replacing traditional approaches to change management. The framework adopts dramatic approach to organisations and change. They argue that recognising the centrality of impression management, storytelling and stagecraft have helped in managing active resistance and opposition to change by experienced managers. Also, the findings in this theme support earlier works that storytelling is one the characters found in leaders (Amernich *et al*, 2007, Bolman & Deal, 1997). What also was found that similarly like metaphors, storytelling resonates easily with Omanis, being part of the Omani customs and traditions. Storytelling is part of the history and culture of Omanis that is soaked in the religion of Islam, which similarly uses metaphors and storytelling extensively in the Holy Quran. In the CCTV engagement, the stories shared by the change agent connected the audience with an incident from their own life experience. This made it easy for the performer to connect with the audience as well as made him able to show his human side.

6.1.7 Theme 12 _ Audience feel being respected & valued

The importance of audience feeling respected and valued by the performer/the change agent came up in a number of interviews. The interviewees feel that being valued and respected can be demonstrated by the performer through understanding the mindset of the audience as well as addressing their concerns and needs.

F2, mentioned that one of the main reasons she moved from one extreme of being against the project to another extreme of becoming supportive to it, is the fact that she felt valued during the engagement (performance) by M1.

Interviewer: So, it actually moved you from one extreme of saying no...

F2: Yes.

Interviewer: To the other extreme of ...

F2: Agreeing and accepting it. I felt valued Mohammed, to be honest, in that moment when someone will come, he came individually and he was talking and he was listening to us and we were talking. I felt yes, back to that comfort zone that this is my place, I'm spending my hours here, I'm comfortable a little bit and it's fine.

In her point of view, F3 feels that being engaged and communicated with, gave her the feeling that she was valued, and that feeling helped her to accept the performance. In another way, she felt appreciated that there was a performance that was made for her and her colleagues.

"I felt I was valued as well. I was being informed before those changes like in any organisational higher level takes place. I was engaged from the beginning. I was informed actually well about those changes, and what are the reasons of those changes. That was my personal feeling, and I believe when I had some

discussions with some of my colleagues around here they had the similar feeling that we were engaged to ... For the things that are coming it wasn't just out of a sudden change, it was discussed or announced to the people. The level of engagement was there. It felt personal actually. It felt like we are valued in this organisation as well". F3

F4 also highlighted that M1 being respectful in his performance was one of the main reasons she was positive towards the project after the engagement.

Interviewer: Do you think it has to do with the person who was doing the engagement? So if it was a different person people might have replied differently to the whole idea!.

F4: It could be because of the time.., the HSSE Manager was very respectful and people liked him. He was a likable person as well and trustworthy, and that's how people view him. So that's a ... I'm sure it's going to play a big role.

The same view was shared by F7, who while describing M1 personality, she highlighted on the importance of him being respectful to people's feeling during the engagement (performance). She explains:

"He's authentic. And, he's also emotional. I felt that. Though he, maybe, he doesn't look like, but he's the person that he listens very well and he respects people's privacy. And, he respects people's feelings" F7

M6 heard two female colleagues having a side talk during the main engagement, where one of them was ensuring to the other that the new change will respect her:

"Don't worry. Don't worry. That's not going to expose you. It's going to respect you."

One of the interesting observation from the transcripts was that the element of 'respect' in the above context was mentioned by most of the female interviewees but not even once by the males. The observation drove several possible questions that might touch different aspects. For instance, do female colleagues feel that they are not being valued in the organisation the same way their male colleagues are? If this is true, is this culturally driven? Is it driven by the organisational hierarchy? Is it a male ego driven that they did not mention the respect aspect? The above observation and the derived questions can be explored in a separate paper in the future.

In a summary, the 12th theme covers the importance of demonstrating respect to the audience and their value to the organisation by the performer/change agent. Addressing the concerns, challenges and needs of the audience is one of the ways through which, the performer can exhibit that. Also understanding the mindset of the audience is another sign of showing respect. Hence, in the case study of CCTV, taking time to communicate with the audience and a building a two-way communication showed respect, which apparently the audience valued and appreciated. This finding supports earlier work in the literature (e.g., Balkin, 2013, Kaifi, 2011, Maxwell, 2010). For instance, Kaifi (2011) highlights the importance of humanising and connecting to employees for them to feel valued and empowered resulting in higher productivity and performance levels.

6.2 Findings from the observations

Throughout the observation exercise related to the style of the performances and the performers, it has been noticed that many performers spend quality time making sure that the stage helps them in their performance in terms of space, lighting, air conditioning etc, some really don't look into those details as long as there are enough chairs for the audience. However, it was noticed that successful performers are those who established credibility in the organisation. Along with that it was noticed that they also prepare well, understand the audience and the audience concerns, sound genuine, understand the topic they are covering, and demonstrate that they do not have a personal agenda but rather align somehow the benefits of the change to both the staff and the organisation. It has been also noticed that the supporting performers not necessarily be on stage with the main performer. In the main engagement, the main performer had three staff members within the audience and was ready to use them to support his performance if required. However, his plan was to ask their opinion to bring balance to the discussion in case he felt he was losing grounds. For them to sit with the crowd rather than standing on stage gives more credibility that they are saying their mind and they are not part of the (show). Observing this, and especially after the interview with the main change agent, reminded me of the magic tricks show before, where most of the time, the one who get called on stage as a volunteer to witness the trick, used to be an associate or part of the performance team.

It was also noticed that body language used extensively in the main performance. For instance, the change agent was showing a concerned face when he was talking about the potential risks of not having CCTV, and he was nodding and showing great care when the any of the audience asked a question. The interesting thing was that he was performing so naturally that he came across as genuine and that he meant what he was saying. The character he was trying to portray on stage was no different on how he normally behaves and performs, at least with the audience, who he normally interacts with on day to day basis in the office. Also, using metaphors and storytelling was noticed in the main performance. The change agent, used the metaphor of (consider me as a brother) addressing the female colleagues. The same metaphor was used by the previous Managing Director who used the same metaphor addressing the management team, when he could not get the support from all them. The difference between the two examples were in the facts that the change agent used to walk to talk and he felt genuine saying it, while the managing director was desperate to get everyone's support and he used that metaphor as a last resort. Regardless of the intentions, what has been noticed is the importance of using metaphors in the engagements and stage performances in SOMC. Using the family metaphor or a story of a family members can help connect the performer with the audience. For instance, the change agent shared the story of the loss of his brother in a car accident in one of the engagement to give a message that this could happen to anyone. During one of the interviews, F1 felt that the change agent was genuine because he shared a personal story.

6.3 Discussion

The elements related to identifying the supporting tools for a successful performance depends on the main performers, their skill, their experience, and the importance of the message to them and to the organisation and of course to the audience. Cultural aspects that relates to the believes, the values, and the social customs and traditions are vital elements to be considered and taken into account when performing or managing change. Tools like storytelling and using metaphors are key elements that can help connect the performer with the audience and get their interest and buy-in.

The above seven themes derived from the interviews and the observations helped addressing the research main question as well as addressing some of the primary questions of the research, which are listed below:

I. What makes a specific performance better than another?

The research shows that what makes one performance is seen as better than another is the level of success of the performance itself. The audience or change recipient are the main and most important judging panel to assess that, based on their reaction to the performance and overall impact on them during and after the performance. For that there are number of factors that are noticed, observed and picked from the ethnography exercise as well as from the interviews, which can help making a specific performance better than another.

Those factors revolve around:

- a. The ability of the performer to build a connect with the audience.
- b. The ability of the performer to get the audience to relate to the message he or she is trying to convey or the change he or she is trying to implement.
- c. The ability of the performer in using the right tone and vocabularies that suits the topic, the audience, the setting and the culture.
- e. Observing the body language of the audience and being able to respond to that.
- f. The ability of the performer in using his own body language to help in delivering the message either to show compassion, or understanding, or even to dive more into the performance.
- g. Proper preparation ahead of the main performance which includes backstage rehearsal.
- h. Having a clear story line including the sequence of the performance and the dialog to use in each step.
- i. The ability of not getting distracted by the audience but actually make the whole performance seamless and spontaneous if possible.
- j. With all of the above, the main element that can make a difference once the above elements are managed is the importance for the performer or the change agent to come across as sincere, authentic, transparent, compassionate, and honest.

II. What are the supporting tools that help a performer in his play/act/performance?

Being a Joint venture of a multi-national organisation, SOMC operates in a multi-cultural environment. It has to find the right balance between the organisational culture of Shell being is the biggest shareholder and the one that SOMC adopts its programmes and processes, the culture of Oman where SOMC operates from, and the different cultures and backgrounds of the staff members who come from 11 countries. Yet, it was obvious that the local culture of Oman prevails when it comes to staff communications, most probably because the majority of the staff are locals. It was found that in the culture of SOMC, using metaphors and storytelling in the performance are strong tools to build the connect between the performer or change agent and the audience. Using and understanding body language also found to be an important tool as well. Elements related to the right venue that comfortably accommodate the audience, the seating and the temperature of the room sounds like basics for any engagement. Yet, they have been emphasised on by both change agents and change recipients.

Having said so, it is important however, to highlight the importance of backstage performance in the success of the front stage. Preparing and rehearsing for the front stage include going through the sequence of the performance, anticipating the questions and the challenges, and even testing the rehearsal with others. It can include also (planting) people in the audience to help balancing views when required. M1 referred to those individuals as his (soldiers) who will act as his (safety valves).

III. How do change agents feel about the performance/act?

IV. Is there resistance to performances from change agents?

It has been noticed that change agents have adapted themselves to be able to perform for their organisation and for the job they fill. In a number of incidents and based on the interviews and the observations, it was noticed that change agents don't have to buy into the change message to be able to deliver it.

Quoting M1:

"Yes. That's the word. I have to believe in the role, so that I sound as genuine as possible. And how do I do that? Normally trying to be open to the extent that I hide probably the area where I'm trying to hide. How will I explain? Okay, maybe ... you know, trying to hide that kind of like area that probably you don't believe in that, by being open to the extent that it can easily camouflage that weak area or that kind of like ... that can send a signal that you are, you don't mean well. It's not easy, depending on the scenario. Certain scenarios this will be almost impossible to actually do that, because it would require really probably lots of thinking or lots of kind of like staging, you know. Like I'm putting it this way".

Having said that, there are some change agents who resist to performances once they feel that the message they are supposed to convey is conflicting with their overall values. The level of tolerance depends on each individual and their philosophy towards matters in life and career.

V. What is the impact of front stage performance and backstage performance in the organisation? Do they cause conflict or distress?

Both front stage and backstage performances can have great impact on the staff and the organisations once they are properly managed. Performances have become important in managing people in organisations. They can be used to

manage changes, drive the organisation towards higher aspirations as well as keeping a high staff morale. However, this can be a two-edge sword. Failing to manage the performances either front stage or backstage can lead to conflicts within team members. Managers can lose their audience in the organisation if the same audience sees them backstage and it happened that the two performances were not consistent or even completely different.

VI. What is the role, impact and potential of dramaturgy in change management in Shell Oman Marketing Company?

The findings from this research reveal that dramaturgy has been and can continue playing a vital and important role in change management in SOMC. It allows managers and change agents to appreciate the importance of backstage for having a successful front stage performance. Preparing for the front stage allows both the performers as well as the audience to better understand each other. This will benefit the organisation as a whole in terms of building communications and understanding. It can also lead to more focused and constructive discussions in the organisation especially around change. It also will allow the organisation to utilise its resources and time in a more efficient manner. Understanding front stage and backstage will enable managers and change agents to know their organisation and the staff members better. It will allow them see more of what they normally do, to appreciate the different views, the strength of the organisation and the pain of the staff. This will help managing

change in a way that is faster and well communicated where people's backstage concerns are understood and addressed while capitalising on their strengths. Being able to appreciate and utilise specific tools such as using metaphors, storytelling and body language in the performance can massively help the managers and the change agents in their front stage performances.

F1 believes that organisations need to engage with people through performances rather than dictating by authority or emails, especially in a change process. She feels that it is important to convey change messages through this kind of performance because they are more appealing and provides a face to face engagement with the audience compared to dictating by an email. She explains:

'you need to engage with people rather than dictating by an email. Why, how, the benefits and etc. It's important to convey such messages with a performance'.

In a change context F believes that in addition to sincerity, the organisations should plan as many engagements as possible. She argues:

"have as many engagements as possible without obviously interrupting the workflow. So even if it's a chit chat in the corridors, or emails, or having monthly meetings, it's good for the people, even if there is no update. We still need to update that there is no update". (She laughs lightly)

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions of the research

This thesis addressed a primary question: What is the role, impact and potential of dramaturgy in change management in SOMC? The objective is to examine the ability of dramaturgy to form an effective method in change management processes, and one that will eventually be used as an integral part of effective change management programmes in SOMC.

The methodology was ethnography, with data collected from staff members through interviews, participant observation and observations in front and backstage meetings. The approach was exploratory and inductive, open to observing what emerged from communications between the people involved in the meetings. Data was analysed through thematic analysis and twelve themes emerged relating to the primary and secondary research questions. The data provided insights to the organisational behaviour of SOMC, not only with regards to dramaturgy and change management, but also in terms of operating in a culture like Oman and the interactions between staff members.

The thesis findings support a number of studies (e.g., Badham et al, 2015, Boje *et al*, 2012, McCormick, 2007) that conclude that dramaturgy plays a vital role in change management in organisations. In SOMC, both front stage performances and backstage performances are witnessed extensively and the case study

demonstrates the huge impact of dramaturgy on change management. The case study also illustrates that using the right metaphors along with story-telling approach can be strong tools for the performer or the change agent to connect with the audience and be able to successfully deliver his/her messages to wider staff members. In other words; using images, stories, fairy tales in a narrative way are important tools for the performer/change agent. This conclusion supports many studies on the effectiveness of using metaphors and story-telling in change management (e.g., Akin & Palmer, 2000, Aremenakis & Bedeian, 1992, Cleary & Packard, 1992, Küpers, 2013, Oztel & Hinz, 2001, Palmer & Dunford, 1996, Sementelli & Abel, 2007). as well as connecting employees to organisational culture and practice (e.g., Cornelissen, 2004, Cunliffe, 2014, Morgan, 2006). This research also complements the importance of having a script as part of the readiness to perform (e.g., Biehl-Missel, 2011, Cornelissen, 2004, Cunliffe, 2014). What this study shows that other studies do not, is that metaphors and story-telling resonate easily with Omanis being part of their history and culture that is soaked in the religion of Islam, which similarly uses metaphors and storytelling extensively in the Holy Quran. Body language is also another tool that this research highlights to be used by the performer. This supports past studies which highlight the importance of body language in change management. (e.g., Conbere & Herohiadi, 2006, Morgan, 2001, Rixon *et al*, 2006, Row, 2015). The findings of the study outlined in Theme 6 also indicate the importance of understanding the body language used by the audience to express their reaction to the performance; either to demonstrate an acceptance or a displeasure of the performance.

This finding support earlier works that highlights the importance of the performer's ability to understand the audience's body language (e.g., Bishop, 1985, Dallas, 2015, Wood, 2005). This will help the performer to continue, adjust or change his/her style during performance. Moreover, it will help to emphasise on a specific message or build connections with the audience.

In SOMC, front stage performance is referred to as an engagement or a meeting, while backstage performance is known as an alignment or a preparation meeting. This research identifies a number of themes that can be added to the existing literature. The study highlighted the importance of 'Alignment' as a way of explaining the work that goes on in backstage and front stage performances, much part of living organisations. The term found extensively in organisational life at SOMC and many other organisations. Backstage meeting often has the goal of aligning participants to the message that has to be conveyed – the coordinated front stage performance. Therefore, alignment is a key element of the rehearsals and practices for the frontstage performances, and in bringing together the supporting team and loyalists. The idea of backstage alignment meetings is for the change agents and the management team to share their perspectives, challenge each other's viewpoint (in case they are different), agree among themselves on the approach or the message that needs to go out to the stakeholders as well as prepare for any challenges or questions expected to be raised in the frontstage. This may also include the language used and even the sequence of the communication.

Another contribution of this research that is not available in other studies is that the importance of context and culture. That although metaphors and storytelling are used in many organisations across the world, they resonate particularly with Omanis because they are part of their history and culture. Hence using storytelling and metaphors in performances in SOMC can have a huge help connecting the audience with the performance.

On the surface, the boundaries between backstage and front stage look like they are distinguished (e.g., Goffman, 1956). Most of the interviewees viewed front stage performances are where engagements happen with a wider audience, and backstage performances are where the preparations take place, and where access is given to limited number of people (metaphorically and not necessarily literally, meetings behind closed doors). However, this research builds on current work of dramaturgy (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016) by showing that the boundaries between backstage and front stage (in this case in SOMC) are not that clear. The moment there is more than one person in the event, the boundaries start getting blurred. What is seen as a backstage performance to one, may be looked at as a front stage to another. This can even be the case despite that both individuals may be change agents or change recipients. Also, the physical location of the performance cannot be a clear distinguisher between each of the stages. Backstage location can be turned into a front stage once one of the audiences walks in. On the other hand, a rehearsal (backstage) can happen in the actual location of the front stage when the audience are not around (e.g., Ashforth *et al*, 2008, Ekstrand & Dammand, 2016).

The thesis also concludes that staff members believe that sincerity, authenticity and genuineness perceived by the audience (staff members) in the performance (role play or act) of the change agent or the performer is a decisive element in accepting that message in a change context. (e.g., Edwards, 2010, Henderson, 2015) Tapping on emotions and sharing personal experiences are supporting tools that can assist building authenticity and sincerity. Building a two-way communication in the performance not only connect the audience to the performer (e.g., Balkin, 2013), but also builds a perception within the audience that they are valued and respected. (e.g., Belal, 2011, Maxwell, 2010). The thesis also reveals that managers may lose their audience in the organisation if the same audience sees them performing backstage and it happened that the two performances were not consistent or even completely different. (e.g., Collishaw *et al*, 2008, Henderson, 2015) This is why giving access to backstage needs to be carefully done based on the scenarios and the level of trust between the participants. Interestingly, dramaturgy terms such as social acting and stage performance can still be perceived in a negative way by managers as well as staff members because both terminologies are perceived that someone is not being naturally her/himself but rather in the practice of deception. The thesis also emphasises on the importance of having communications with the different stakeholders before taking any noticeable steps in the change programme. This support earlier works (e.g., Johansson and Heide, 2008, Kotter, 1996) on the importance of pre-change communication, and argue that it helps avoiding the stakeholders (staff members)

getting into speculations, rumours, and a lot of corridor talks. Avoiding those is avoiding wasted energies that can instead be directed towards productivity and organisation's tasks and targets.

7.2 The research limitations

This research has a number of limitations. The research is mindful that the data gathered from the interviews were from 22 staff members, which is a relatively small number compared to the total number of SOMC staff. Hence, it makes it difficult to generalise the result of the research. However, this has to be balanced by the fact that this was an in-depth study generating rich qualitative data and that every performance is relative to the context. Also, despite that English is widely spoken in SOMC and all interviews were conducted in English language, it is important to highlight that English is not the mother tongue of the interviewees. Hence, there might have been some limitations in the phrases or explanation used in their answers to describe a specific situation. It is worth highlighting that the thesis did not analyse the theoretical style that was used by the change agents in the case study of CCTV. Future studies can explore the style that can best fit from range of realisation styles that are used in organisational theatre such as realistic, naturalistic, melodramatic, absurd, burlesque etc., based on the situation and the audience. Also, this research does not aim to explore the emotions of the performer before, during and after the performance. It also does not explore how

the performer feels when the audience (perform) with him either through gestures or utterances, and how that communication impacts his performance. Similarly, this aspect can be picked and explored in future studies. Another limitation relates to the fact that the observation type in gathering the data, was participant as observer. With my role being the CEO of the company, this might have raised reactivity concerns with some participants impacting their natural behaviours, leading them to being more careful with their comments, gestures, and body language, and relatively not being at ease during the observation. Despite the measures that have been taken into account to reduce reactivity, it still remains a possibility and one of the limitations of this study. Moreover, this research does not aim to quantify the extent of the impact of dramaturgy on change management in the organisation. The philosophical stance that this research has been written with is an inductive interpretivist approach. Despite of the above limitations, the research provides a good understanding and practical implications of applying dramaturgy in change management that can be expanded and tested in other organisations.

7.3 Recommendations of the current research

This research has concluded that dramaturgy have been and can continue playing a major role in change management in SOMC. However, dramaturgical approaches in SOMC were not organisation driven, but rather driven by change agents. This research recommends that dramaturgy should be taken into account in future change management plans and programmes in SOMC in a structured manner. SOMC can largely benefit from utilising dramaturgy as a tool to help in successful management of change programmes. It allows managers and change agents to appreciate the importance of backstage for having a successful front stage performance. Preparing for the front stage allows both the performers as well as the audience to better understand each other. This will benefit the organisation as a whole in terms of building communications and understanding. It can also lead to more focused and constructive discussions in the organisation especially around change. Moreover, appreciating dramaturgy as an important tool will help SOMC and the management avoid deploying resources to manage the situations that are created due to lack of awareness or undermining the power of dramaturgy. While this research has identified twelve key themes from the data analysis, it is important to highlight that there might be additional themes that can be identified in future applications of Dramaturgy in SOMC depending on the nature of change and the target audience.

7.4 Recommendations for future research

Further research can explore the use and relevance of dramaturgy in change management programmes in other organisations. While there have been studies on this topic, most of them have been in a westernised context and have not focused on change recipients from Oman where dramaturgical tools such as metaphors and storytelling resonate well with the people being part of their culture and can be explored in a larger context of organisational behaviour in Oman especially in change management.

7.5 Challenges in practicing dramaturgy in organisations

One of the main challenges foreseen in translating this research into practice relates not only to linking the topic of dramaturgy to managers minds and skill sets, but also explain the relevance of the topic in understating staff members behaviours. This challenge was encountered during data gathering process in both the pilot study and the main research. It needed an explanation to the interviewees on the relevance of dramaturgy to their day to day work. Looking at the research question, where the research is trying to explore and understand the role of dramaturgy in a change context in SOMC, it is noticed that while change management is part of the identity of the SOMC, dramaturgy is not mentioned at all in the organisation language despite being a behaviour of everyday life. Another challenge will be the mindset of the managers who are

used to practicing based on experience rather than trying to test and apply a theory they read about or heard of. I noticed many side comments from managers within my own team who sarcastically commented on introducing or explaining a theory with the comment of: are we being lectured?! I believe the thesis will be a huge test for me as well as for the theory. However, this is offset by the situation that managers seem to be engaging with ideas of dramaturgy intuitively. Hence, dramaturgy offers them a new language to understand what it is they do and can do. Once it is proven as a reliable tool, it can be explored in other situations in the organisation and hopefully in other organisations as well.

'It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters, in the end'. Le Guin, U. (2010).

CHAPTER 8: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

8.1 Introduction

I want to start my personal reflections on my DBA journey by going back to July 2013, and specifically to the first dinner gathering arranged during module 1 involving the fellow colleagues of cohort 13 and a number of academics of the University of Bradford School of Management. There was a question that each one of the students in the cohort was asked; and that was; why did he/she decide to do their DBAs?

I remember my answer very well. I answered that I have personally arrived at a stage in my life where I am looking forward to start a different learning journey. I remember saying that in order to do so, I wish I can tour around the world to learn new things, understand and appreciate the different cultures, rediscover myself, and be a better person. I remember saying, that since this tour was not possible for a number of reasons, I felt that the DBA journey might be an alternative option that could give me what I was aspiring for and might end up giving me the same outcome. I believed that the DBA journey will give me

access to a lot of cultures through interacting with my colleagues and academics who come from different countries and background. Similarly as important, was the learning I will pick up from attending the classes, conducting the assignments, reading and reviewing the literature. I also remember saying that; on top of these learning I wouldn't mind the title that comes with it after completing the Doctorate.

The DBA studies have clearly widened my knowledge and enriched my understanding and experiences in many areas. I have also experienced many difficulties and obstacles either as a researcher in collecting the data and adequately reviewing the literature, or as a practitioner who was doing this study as a part time while being the CEO of the organisation he works for and being responsible for the performance and the bottom-line of the organisation.

Collectively the DBA journey has contributed heavily to my personal development. I have acquired new knowledge, gained new tools, and learnt many skills that I have, directly or indirectly, used in compiling my thesis and in practicing my day to-day managerial role in the office. Over the last five years of my DBA journey, the learnings I was able to acquire and obtain were massive. The summary of these learnings is shared below as my personal reflections, and they can be categorised into three areas; learnings as a researcher, learnings as practitioner and personal learnings.

8.2 Learnings as a researcher

Clearly this journey has given me the knowledge and the tools to be able to do a research that follows academic steps and methodologies. Also, it allowed me to understand and appreciate the different approaches that can be considered, the different steps that are required in researches, and appreciate their importance in the stages of a research. For instance, taking the usefulness of the design stage was an important step that has helped me not only in identifying the dependent and the independent variables in my research question, but also in listing down what I want to arrive to and measure in my research.

The literature reviews enriched my knowledge and understanding of the topic of dramaturgy. I have to say that at a point of time I was crossing the lines between three main topics and notions, namely; metaphors, storytelling, and drama. Somehow, I found myself caught between the three. It was with the help of my supervisor that I was able to find my way and focus again on what is it that I am addressing. A considerable time was invested in the literature review, and it was very difficult to have that comfort that the review of the literature was sufficient enough to cover the main theories and the different arguments related to the topic as well as the derived notions and themes.

Another learning was to challenge the way I have been conducting things in practice. This mindset, I believe, fast tracked embracing the reality that while I am a practitioner for over 25 years and might be an expert in what I do at work, yet the reality is that I have taken this journey to learn new methods and approaches. Despite my internal experience in dealing, to some extent, with the data collection methods of interviews, observations, and surveys, following the academic methods of data collection, the guidelines in the literature review and paying attention to so many details have given me the ability to get my hands on more detailed data and more insights from the data gathering processes. For instance, working for an oil marketing company, part of my experience was to observe the customer service delivered by our petrol station pump attendants to the motorist. This experience had given me knowledge and understanding of ways of observations. Yet, through the new learnings, I became more structured and mindful of the processes that needs to be followed. Also, I became more mindful of why things are argued to be done in a specific manner and also aware of the correct terminologies of the tools and methods normally used and practiced in the workplace.

The interview process made me realise that once the session is managed well and trust is established, the interviewees can go on explaining their views and experiences, especially if a genuine interest in what they say is demonstrated by the interviewer either verbally or through face expressions and body language.

Body language like, nodding, smiling, and showing interest are felt to be very important to encourage the interviewees to speak up more. On the other hand, gaining the confidence and the trust of the interviewees was very important and going hand in hand with the importance of using the body language as well as understanding the body language of the interviewees. In my interviews, there were times when the interviewee was about to say something and then they hesitate. Paying attention to the body language and building that trust and confidence for them to share their experiences and thoughts was vital in encouraging them to share their thoughts. This has eventually helped in understanding many human behaviours that many people are normally shy or not comfortable talking about or sharing. For instance, while working on module 3 assignment, which was about understanding why male staff members take their mobile phones with them to the rest room while female staff members don't, I noticed a sort of hesitation and blushing from a female colleague while answering a specific question in the interview. By noticing that moment, understanding her body language, giving her comfort, and building on her confidence and trust in me, I was able to encourage the female colleague to speak about something that is culturally not comfortable to share, which has to do with their monthly periods. I learned that ladies in this culture normally keep their mobile phones in their hand bags, and they feel embarrassed to take their hand bags with them to the toilets to avoid embarrassment as they feel their male colleagues might link that to them having their monthly periods.

Another learning was that no matter how confident and relaxed the interviewees were, they start feeling uncomfortable once the questions and the discussions got into the area of when they do things in private (like using the restroom for instance). I also learned that the moment the participants get the choice not to answer, they feel in power again. Yet, it doesn't take away the shyness element from most of them.

I also learned that; writing and publishing a good research needs a right recipe. A good research is not only about reviewing the literature in a critical manner. Nor it is only conducting it in a structured method and approach. Nor it is only about gathering data, analysing them, and making sense of them. In addition to the above I learned that, one of the main challenges are putting all these in a way that it can be easily understood and writing it in a style that will be interesting to the readers both from academics and practitioners point of view. Moreover, and most importantly demonstrate uniqueness and an addition to what have been already written and argued.

8.3 Learnings as a practitioner

Half way through my DBA journey I successfully competed and got promoted in my workplace to the role of the CEO of SOMC. As a practitioner, I started noticing that I was naturally applying the learnings I was acquiring from this journey in both the current role and the previous one. It did not take me a while

to notice that I started by default to utilise the learning from the observations and interviews and applying them in my day to day activities. This includes paying a lot of attention to the body languages that happen in a meeting between the main performer and the audience. I started being alert and throughout an engagement even when there are pauses. This has allowed me to have more insights and understanding of many staff related behaviours. During work interviews, I noticed that I can get much more from the job candidates by just using the right body language, when I started making them feel more comfortable. Yet, I feel that, one my biggest learnings out of this journey as a practitioner, is understating the importance of dramaturgy and the vital role it can play in the context of change management, especially in a culture like Oman. The twelve themes that were derived from the data analysis showed how elements such as using the body language, metaphors, and storytelling can help change agents with their messages to the change recipients. Being very careful in giving access to staff members in backstage is another important finding for me as a practitioner. While the intentions of including more people/staff members in the backstage were to help in fast spreading the message with the wider audience in the organisation, the risks for that could actually jeopardise the whole change message if some of the people involved in the backstage had a hidden agenda or were not mature enough to understand the implications of sharing the detailed discussions of the backstage. Another message that this research has emphasised on, was that being genuine and honest with people is very crucial for managers and change agents to be accepted by staff members.

Also, another learning for me as a practitioner was the importance of having pre-change communications with the different stakeholders. I learned how important this step is to be completed before going ahead with the change. Failing to do that with all stakeholders will potentially lead to dissatisfaction, resentments, and increased corridor talks within the organisation. This was evident in this research. As a result, the organisation will end up managing this through deploying a lot of its resources including time, people and plans to (fire fight) this situation that it had created.

8.4 Personal learnings

As a person, I believe that one of my biggest learning was to understand my philosophical stance in life and how I perceive the world and matters of life in general. I am sure that throughout my career and personal life I have been looking at issues and scenarios as well as making decisions based on a number of elements including the way I manage reality, but without realising that the way I live, work, and perceive things are very much shaped by my personal philosophical approach, until I have gone through the module of philosophical approaches. I also learned that philosophy is beyond researches. It is imbedded in the way I observe, understand, learn, behave and act. Whether we realise it or not, I personally believe that most of us are adopting a philosophical stance in the way we perceive the world. Hence, on a personal level, I believe that one of the main learning I have obtained is identifying and forming my philosophical approach in perceiving and understanding the world.

The other aspects that were part of this journey were the general experiences that I have collected one way or another in the five years span of my DBA study. Starting from the experiences I have gone through while travelling forth and back for my classes and workshops, all the way to the learnings from the discussions with my fellow colleagues either in the taught modules or in the peer review workshops. I also noticed that I became more open to embrace changes in life in general, and my sense of accountability has increased versus self-justification.

8.5 Challenges throughout the DBA journey

The realisation of this research and the different learnings described above came through a lot of challenges that I have encountered at the different stages of my DBA journey.

In the taught modules, the most challenging one for me was Module 2, which was related to the philosophical approaches. The whole module 2 experience has been full of different types of emotions and learning for me. What started with an excitement about the subject on day 1 of the module was soon overshadowed by the difficulties of coping up with the new terminologies and ideas that started putting me into a feeling of unease, being lost and frustrated. In spite of the interesting and unconventional teaching style of the module

leader, the frustration level increased by day three and gave me a feeling that this module might be the most difficult one in the taught modules. However, just like taking up the previous assignment, the reading of the literature review and trying to tackle the question and the requirement of the assignment were essential to better understand the subject and appreciate how deep the whole philosophy world is.

In conducting this research, the challenges I have encountered were many. Those challenges can be clustered under two main areas; (1) general challenges related to my learning and the contribution to my work, and (2) specific ones related to designing the research, gathering the data, analysing them, and addressing the ethical issues throughout and after the research. The general challenges can be summarised in the following two questions; how can I cover the main papers written about the topic? and how can I tackle my research in a manner that will add value and contribute to the existing knowledge of the subject? The ongoing self-challenge of whether the literature review was adequate enough never left me. The more I was reading in the literature, the more aspects I was discovering on my topic. The specific challenges related to the research were many, starting from identifying the research design, philosophy and methodology all the way to addressing the ethical issues before, during and after the research is completed. There were also challenges related to being an insider researcher within the organisation I am heading, where there are power imbalance and bias factors that need to be

addressed. There were also the usual challenges related to the culture and time management. In data gathering, one of the challenges that I became mindful of is having an interview in a public area like a coffee shop or a diner. In this set up, there is always a possibility that either the interview or the interviewer might get interrupted by an external element such as a compatriot who stops by to greet or, just like what happened in one of my interviews, by receiving a call on their mobile phone. This interruption will affect the flow of ideas coming to the mind of the interviewees. However, I believe that my main challenge in the data gathering was to ensure that I can gain the confidence of the staff members of the organisation I am heading to speak up about their experiences to me as a researcher and not as a CEO. I believe that the information sheet and the consent form has helped to some extent. Also, the set up in the interview, including the room and the seating arrangement ensured that there is no visible power element. For instance, I ensured that the interviews take place around a small round table and I avoided having the interviews in my chamber. Also, I think my management style of engaging, having an open-door policy and talking to staff members and knowing them all by names have helped in reducing the power imbalance to a large extent.

During the observation exercise, the main challenges were related to managing reactivity from the participants due to the type of observation followed in this research, being overt participant as an observer type. Also, the fact that the I am

an insider researcher brought in other challenges related to ensuring that being too close to the case study and being emotionally involved in the organisation will not compromise my objectivity in collecting the data and analysing them.

From ethical issues perspective, a number of concerns and challenges were addressed. For instance, before going ahead with the research, number of approvals from my organisation were obtained to ensure that I do not disclose any confidential data about SOMC. Also, all interviewees were given consent forms to review and sign with a free will to decide on their participation. An email was sent by Human Resources department to all staff informing them about the unstructured observation exercise and the timeframe.

Time management remained a huge challenge that I had to deal with. The reality of studying part time while being in a very demanding job was not easy. Add to that my personal obligations towards my family members, being a husband, a father of four children and also part of a relatively large family, in a culture where you have social obligations towards your larger family was very challenging to manage. It was not easy at all to miss many important family functions and gatherings and reduce my visits to my brothers, sisters, and in laws to the bare minimum over the last five years. I believe that despite there were moments of unease and frustrations that they went through for me not being physically there in many occasions, the support and the understanding from my family was very crucial and helped me mentally to continue to the end of my DBA journey.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Interviewee Information Sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

My name is Mohammed Al Balushi, studying in Bradford University School of Management as Doctoral student in Business Administration. I am doing a research about the role of dramaturgy in change management in Shell Oman Marketing Company (SOMC). I would like to invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This information sheet may contain phrases or words that you may not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take the time to explain. If you have questions later, please do not hesitate to ask them to me, and I will be happy to answer them.

It is worth clarifying that CCTV footage and recordings are not part of my research. Also, please note that ethics approval for this research has been granted by the Chair of the Humanities, Social and Health Sciences Research Ethics Panel at the University of Bradford on 20/01/17.

Purpose of the research

The aim of this research is to understand the role of dramaturgy in change management in SOMC using the case study of installing CCTV system cameras in SOMC. From a sociological perspective, dramaturgy refers to the social interaction of people in everyday life.

Types of research intervention

This research will involve your participation in an interview that will take around one hour. During the interview we will discuss your views on the project of installing CCTV cameras in SOMC and the role that dramaturgy played in that.

Process

During the interview, I will sit down with you at a time and a place that you are comfortable with. It is up to your preference, the interview can take place in a public place, or a closed office. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and I will move on to the next question. No one else but me as an interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and anonymity will always be maintained. The entire interview will be audio-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the recording. The recording

device will be locked along with my study materials. Only I and my research supervisor will have access to the raw interview data. The transcriptions will be done by an independent agency and your name and personal data will not be shared with them. The audio recordings will be destroyed 24 months after the date of the interview. For audit purposes, the confidential data gathered from this research can be held by the University of Bradford for up to ten years.

Risks

There is a possibility that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, I do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help me find answers to my research question and provide information that will help manage change more effectively.

Thank you token

You will be given the option to choose between a power bank charger or a flash memory as a thank you token for your time and participation in the research.

Anonymity

The information collected from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Your identity will not be shared with or given to anyone inside or outside the organisation. While writing the research report and before the result of the research is out, you will be given the opportunity to review the parts related to you and your views.

Right to refuse or withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way. You may stop participating in the [discussion/interview] or withdraw at any time that you wish without your job being affected. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview/discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly. Moreover, If you decide to withdraw after the interview has taken place, you can contact me on my below contact details within 7 days from the date of the interview. Accordingly, your interview points and views will not be included in the research, and the audio recording of your interview will be immediately destroyed.

Receiving updates and relevant information about the study

If you wish to receive updates and on-going relevant information about the study please contact me on the contact details below.

Thank you,

Mohammed Al Balushi (Researcher) Professor Ann Cunliffe (Supervisor)



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Appendix 2 Interviewee Informed Consent



CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

Title of the research project: The role of dramaturgy in change management in Shell Oman Marketing Company (SOMC): A case study of installing CCTV cameras in SOMC.

Name and position of researcher: Mohammed Mahmood Al Balushi, DBA Student, Bradford University School of Management

By ticking the boxes below:

1. I Confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons.

☐

3. I agree to take part in the study

☐

Please tick a box

	Yes	No
4. I agree to the interview being audio-recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of the participant

Date

Signature

Name of the researcher

Date

Signature

Mohammed Al Balushi

